

## Iraqi dissidents report heavy fighting in south

CAIRO (AP) — Iraqi forces have widened a military offensive in southern Iraq in an attempt to wipe out bases of Shiite rebels, two Iraqi opposition groups said Tuesday. The supreme council for the Islamic revolution in Iraq and the Iraqi Communist Party also reported anti-government disturbances in Baghdad and other southern Iraqi cities. The reports could not be independently confirmed, and there was no immediate word from the Iraqi government on any fighting. In a statement, the Iran-based council said soldiers backed by tanks and artillery attacked several villages in marshes near Nasirya, 360 kilometres south of Baghdad. The raids were part of a campaign that began last week when troops launched an attack against rebel positions in areas between Nasirya and Al Amara, 140 kilometres to the Northeast.

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## Egyptian president shuttles between Ankara, Damascus to defuse crisis

ANKARA (AP) — Shuttling between Ankara and Damascus, Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak tried Tuesday to avert a feared war between Turkey and Syria over Kurdish rebels.

In three hours of closed-door talks with Mubarak, Turkish President Suleyman Demirel upheld his nation's case that Syria is sheltering Turkish Kurd rebels responsible for cross-border attacks. Turkey is threatening force against Syria, which denies harbouring the rebels.

"The Turkish side has explained the support extended by Syria to the terrorist activities in detail and said that this cannot go on. It has been stated that the Turkish public is outraged and pointed out to solid steps that have to be taken by Syria," Demirel said in a statement after the talks.

### U.S. encouraged by Mubarak's efforts

WASHINGTON (AFP) — The United States said Tuesday it was encouraged by diplomatic efforts by Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak to pull Syria and Turkey back from the brink of a possible conflict.

"We are encouraged by the work that President Mubarak has been doing," said U.S. State Department spokesman James Rubin.

He said Washington was "concerned about the risk that the situation could be spinning out of control," which he underlined would represent "a big mistake."

Turkey is threatening to take military action against Syria for allegedly harbouring Kurdish rebels from the Kurdistan Labour Party (PKK) who are fighting to secede from Ankara.

Showing a degree of understanding for Ankara's position, Rubin said "the Turks have to make clear that the Syrians need to do more to rein in the PKK."

He said Washington had been in touch with the parties. The State Department on Monday rejected suggestions it was staying out of the dispute because of the need to secure support from Syria in relaunching the Middle East peace process.

### Lower House of Parliament urges diplomatic solution (see page 3)

peacefully.

Mubarak told Egyptian journalists on his plane that he proposed that Turkey and Syria "meet to discuss the details of the problem" over the Kurdish rebels, Egypt's Middle East News Agency (MENA) reported.

Mubarak acknowledged Demirel's concern about the rebels, but added: "I pointed out to him that our region does not accept or endure any military action or armed confrontation."

MENA also said Mubarak was trying to arrange a meeting between the Turkish and Syrian foreign ministers as well as creation of a "joint committee to start meeting to rebuild the bridges of confidence" between the neighbouring countries.

Libyan leader Muammar Qadhafi weighed in on Syria's side Tuesday, saying "any aggression against Syria will be considered as an aggression against Libya according to the Arab joint defence pact."

Turkey stressed in a presidential statement Tuesday that the issue was not linked to Turkish-Arab relations. The United States and Russia, along with most countries of the Middle East, urged the two countries to reach a peaceful solution.

Relations between Turkey and Syria have long been troublesome. Damascus is uneasy with Ankara's plans to build dams on the Euphrates River, a key source of water for Syria, while Turkey accuses Damascus of having designs on a Turkish border province, Hatay, which has a sizeable Arab population.

Syria also feels threatened by the military and diplomatic ties between Turkey and Israel.

But the recent rise in tension appears part of Ankara's push to end fighting in a 14-year-old Kurdish insurgency in which 37,000 people have died. The rebels are fighting for Kurdish autonomy in southeast Turkey.

Turkey has reportedly sent 10,000 troops to its border with Syria. Newspapers have suggested that its forces could stage raids on rebel camps in the Syrian-controlled Bekaa Valley in Lebanon. There have been unconfirmed reports of Turkish jets buzzing the border area in a show of force.



Turkish President Suleyman Demirel escorts his Egyptian counterpart Hosni Mubarak upon the latter's arrival at Ankara's Esenboga airport on Tuesday (Reuters photo)

## Envoy says only way to end crisis is to have PKK leader out of Syria

By Tareq Ayyoub

AMMAN — The current standoff between Syria and Turkey will only end after Damascus hands to Ankara the leader of Kurdish Labour Party (PKK) or kick him out of its territory, Turkish envoy to Jordan said Tuesday.

Speaking to reporters at his residence, Ambassador Suha Umar also rejected all mediation efforts by Middle Eastern leaders to end the crisis between Damascus and Ankara.

"They [the Syrians] should hand PKK leader [Abdullah] Ocalan to us or kick him out of Syria and stop any financial or military support to the PKK," the ambassador said.

"We told the Egyptians that they should go and talk to the Syrians, not to us. We are not asking for mediation," he said, in reference to Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak's efforts to mediate between the two

countries.

"There is no need to go to Ankara. They [mediators] should tell Syria that this is going to be very dangerous and to stop [its] support for terrorism. The solution is in Damascus not in Ankara," he said.

The Turkish decision to "make Syria stop its support for terrorism was taken a long time ago," he said.

The ambassador said that his country was considering all options to deal with the dispute with Syria: "Military, political and economic sanctions and what ever it is."

Asked if his country was ready for strained ties with the Arabs if it decided to fight Syria, he said: "Yes. If they join a military action [against Turkey]... because it is a matter of life and death for us."

"I am astonished to hear that what is happening is against Arab interests. What about Turkish interests?" the ambassador

asked.

The ambassador said that Syria and Iraq are negotiating a transfer of PKK camps from Damascus and the Bekaa Valley in Lebanon to locations near the Iraqi capital.

The ambassador said that PKK's Ocalan was recently in Baghdad to "see the ground and prepare the place for his people."

Although he said the PKK did not move camps so far, he warned that "it is a great risk and a crucial mistake for (Iraq) to do such a thing."

The ambassador said that his country has sent messages to Syrian leaders through the Turkish embassy in Damascus two days ago "but still no reply arrived from their side."

He said Syria has to end its support for Ocalan or "we will take action. No country should be allowed to support any kind of terrorism."

## All Arab countries would recognise Palestinian state — Mubarak

CAIRO (AFP) — Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak said Tuesday that all Arab countries would recognise a Palestinian state if Yasser Arafat goes ahead and declares one in May of next year. "All of the Arab countries would support the proclamation of a Palestinian state because it would just be the application of international resolutions," Mubarak said in an interview with Egyptian state television. Arafat has repeatedly warned that he will declare a Palestinian state in May 1999, when the Oslo interim accords between Israel and the Palestinians expire. The president of the Palestinian National Authority has said he will unilaterally declare the creation of a state at that point. Israel has vowed to vigorously oppose such a move.

## Jordan condemns Tlass' statements

AMMAN (Petra) — Jordan on Tuesday expressed condemnation of the statements made by Syrian Defence Minister Mustafa Tlass "doubting the Kingdom's role in the 1973 Arab-Israeli war" and "offending Jordan, the Jordanian people and some Jordanian tribes."

Information Minister Nasser Judeh said the "unusual and dubious statements on Jordan's role in the 1973 October War by the Syrian minister belittling the sacrifices of the Arab (Jordanian) Army and the blood of its martyrs which mingled with the blood of Syrian, Saudi, Moroccan, Iraqi and other Arab brethren"

an border.

"We extended assistance to these forces all through until they reached Syria and continued to offer assistance to them on their way back to Saudi Arabia," he noted.

The minister said that the Cabinet refused any attempt to shed suspicions on Jordan's stands, "particularly at this very stage when Jordan is doing its utmost to protect Arab interests and help the region avert a new disaster."

"We don't know the reason for making such offensive statements against Jordan and the Jordanian tribes, especially that the Kingdom's honourable stands on the nation's causes are known to all"

**'We don't know the reason for making such offensive statements against Jordan and the Jordanian tribes, especially that the Kingdom's honourable stands on the nation's causes are known to all'**

were condemned by the Council of Ministers' meeting Tuesday evening.

"The Cabinet denounced in its session, which was held in the evening under the chairmanship of Prime Minister Faysal Tarawneh, the Syrian minister's statement," said Judeh, adding that "in his statement Tlass ignores the key Jordanian role in Ramadan War in 1973."

"Unfortunately, Tlass was quoted as giving a baseless statement on Jordan preventing the Saudi Army from reaching the battlefield of the October War," said Judeh, adding that facts on the war are already known to all.

"When the Saudi Army entered Jordanian territory heading for Syria they were moving according to set military plans. They used to stop at certain points to rest and then proceed to the battlefield."

Judeh stressed that Jordan extended to the Saudi forces at that time every possible assistance and met all their needs, establishing military rescue points at the main crossroads until they reached the Jordanian-Syrian

honourable stands vis-a-vis its nation are quite known, and particularly that Jordan spared no effort in extending assistance and support to the nation's causes," Judeh said.

Voicing hope that there would be no repetition of such statements, the minister stressed the historic, brotherly ties between the Jordanian and Syrian peoples.

Judeh, meanwhile, reiterated Jordan's stand on the crisis between Syria and Turkey, saying Jordan advocates defusing the crisis through dialogue and peaceful means.

In its session, the Cabinet was briefed by Tarawneh on his meeting with His Majesty King Hussein at the Mayo Clinic on Sunday.

The premier reassured the ministers of the King's health, who on Monday started the fourth stage of chemotherapy at the Mayo Clinic, saying the King was responding well to treatment.

Tarawneh also briefed the ministers on issues raised in his meeting with His Majesty and the King's directives to the Cabinet.

## Lahoud will be new Lebanese president

BEIRUT (AP) — Army commander General Emile Lahoud will be Lebanon's next president after Syria, the power-broker in the country, approved his name, officials and news reports said Tuesday.

"Congratulations, your excellency the general," Prime Minister Rafik Hariri told Lahoud Monday in a telephone conversation, which was headlined on the front-page of Al Safir, a leftist newspaper.

Lebanese media said the matter was settled at a meeting in Damascus Monday between outgoing President Elias Hrawi and Syrian President Hafez Assad, whose country dominates its weaker, smaller neighbour.

Agriculture Minister Shawki Fakboury, a Hrawi confidant, told reporters Tuesday that Lahoud is expected to be elected by the 128-member parliament at an extraordinary session on Oct. 15.

The election is a formality since other candidates have little chance now that Syria has thrown its weight behind Lahoud. In another formality prior to the election, the parliament will amend the constitution, which forbids senior public



Gen. Emile Lahoud

lic servants from running for president.

"It's been decided... and the general will be elected within 10 days," Al Nahar, a leading newspaper, said.

The new president must be sworn in on Nov. 24, the day Hrawi leaves office at the end of his six-year term. "It was a good choice," Hariri, who is visiting Saudi Arabia, was quoted by Al Nahar as saying.

The choice of Lahoud, a Maronite Catholic, will continue a 55-year-old tradition under which the president is a Maronite, the prime minister a Sunni Muslim and the parliament speaker a Shiite Muslim.

## Arafat, Netanyahu, Albright to meet Wednesday — Palestinians

GAZA CITY (Agencies) — Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, Palestinian President Yasser Arafat and U.S. Secretary of State Madeleine Albright will all meet together Wednesday in a bid to revive the Middle East peace process, Palestinian and U.S. officials said Tuesday.

"The meeting will be held Wednesday morning at the Erez Crossing" between Israel and the Gaza Strip, Arafat advisor Nabil Abu Rudeina told AFP.

U.S. State Department spokesman James Rubin, who is in the area with Albright, said the meeting will be held at 11 a.m. (0900 GMT). "There may be some additional meetings after that," he said.

"Secretary Albright will try to lock in as much progress as possible" and leave U.S. envoy Dennis Ross and U.S. Assistant Secretary of State Martin Indyk "to clear away the underbrush," Rubin said.

Earlier, Netanyahu's spokesman said the prime minister "favoured such a meeting if it is helpful in advancing the negotiations before the next summit in

the United States."

Another high-level Palestinian official said that the self-rule Palestinian Authority expected to hear at the meeting "Israeli answers which had been put off."

This official, who asked not to be identified, said that the United States was showing an "understanding" attitude toward the Palestinians during the negotiations.

Albright opened talks with Netanyahu after she arrived Tuesday for a two-day visit to the area, and Israeli public radio said she planned to meet with him again Tuesday night in the prime minister's office in Jerusalem.

She also held a luncheon meeting with Arafat in the West Bank town of Jericho. Albright warned that time is running out to save the Mideast peace process.

"Time is not on our side, if we don't move forward quickly, we may lose the opportunity," Albright said at the two meetings.

Despite her ominous tone, Albright appeared satisfied with her initial round of talks, saying "this is one of the pleasantest mornings I

have spent in this region."

Her mission is to pave the way for a mid-October summit near Washington with U.S. President Bill Clinton, Netanyahu and Arafat.

Rubin said: "We envisage the Washington summit as a multi-day intensive exercise where some heavy lifting is going to be required. It will not be simply a photo op."

Clinton hopes the marathon talks outside Washington will yield agreement on a U.S. package of Israeli withdrawals from the West Bank and Palestinian security measures designed to revive the peace process after nearly 19 months of acrimonious deadlock.

Albright said the goal was to wrap up issues held over from interim peace accords and launch so-called final status negotiations on a permanent peace settlement.

But she warned that big obstacles to an agreement remain.

"It is clear that as the Washington summit approaches, there is much work to do and hard questions to answer by both sides," she said. "There are

tough choices to be made."

Washington has been seeking for a year to gain acceptance of a plan centred on Israel extending Palestinian control to another 13 per cent of the West Bank and the Palestinians taking tougher action against armed militants.

Netanyahu resisted the U.S. deal for months, but the two sides have now agreed to a formula under which Israel would add 10 per cent of the West Bank to the 27 per cent already under full or partial Palestinian rule and declare another three per cent "nature reserves" under joint control.

Rubin said: "On further redeployment, we are further along than in other areas, although it is not completely resolved."

The peace process is facing a May 1999 deadline when the Oslo interim accords between Israel and the Palestinians expire.

Arafat has said he will unilaterally declare the creation of a state at that point while Israel has vowed to vigorously oppose such a move.

Rubin said: "If the peace

process is back on track and the final-status talks are launched, one can envisage to continue working after that date (May 1999)."

**Palestinian wounded in Hebron**

In Hebron, meanwhile, Israeli troops fired rubber-coated bullets and tear gas during a clash with Palestinian stone-throwers in the West Bank town of Hebron on Tuesday, witnesses said.

They said one Palestinian was hit in the head with a rubber bullet and sustained moderate wounds. The Israeli army said it knew of no clashes in Hebron and had no report of a wounded Palestinian.

Israeli soldiers have wounded at least 10 Palestinians in intermittent clashes in Hebron since last Wednesday, when a grenade attack by suspected Palestinian militants wounded 13 Israeli troops.

The violence underscored the challenge facing U.S. secretary of state, who arrived in the region on Tuesday in hopes of breaking a 19-month-old deadlock in Israeli-Palestinian

peacemaking.

Arafat's Fatah faction called on residents of Hebron to stage a general strike on Thursday if the curfew imposed on the centre of the town last week was not lifted and set Friday as a day of clashes with Israeli troops.

"Friday the 9th is a day of clashes along all the lines with the occupying enemy," Fatah said in a leaflet.

Masked members of the group handed out the leaflets on the streets and posted them on store fronts. Palestinians said the call was extraordinary, coming from Arafat's own faction.

In a related development, Palestinian authorities arrested 15 suspected members of the Islamic Resistance Movement, Hamas, Palestinian security sources said.

The group has spearheaded opposition to Israeli-Palestinian peace moves claiming responsibility for suicide attacks that killed scores since 1993 when Israelis and Palestinians signed their first accord.

Hamas condemned the arrests in a statement faxed to Reuters.



## 'Over 110 people die in Algeria'

ALGIERS (R) — More than 110 civilians, rebels and soldiers have been killed in Algeria in the past few days, including seven people whose throats were slashed overnight in a hamlet west of Algiers, government forces and newspapers said on Tuesday.

The government forces said in a statement read on state-run radio that rebels stormed Tizi hamlet in Mascara province, 300 kilometres west of Algiers, on Monday night and cut the throats of seven people. "Immediately after being alerted, security forces launched an operation to track down the perpetrators of that criminal action," the statement said, blaming the attack on Islamists.

La Nouvelle Republique reported on Tuesday that troops shot dead "more than 100 rebels" in Zaccar mountain and neighbouring

Tagara forest in Chlef, 130 kilometres northeast of Mascara town, in the few past days.

Le Quotidien d'Oran said on Monday "more than 100 armed Islamists" had been killed by troops in Mascara province.

It was not clear whether the two reports referred to the same operation. A bomb ripped through a market in the province on Monday killing at least three people and wounding 62, officials said.

La Nouvelle Republique said on Tuesday five people were killed and 62 wounded in the blast at an open-air market.

Mascara, site of gruesome massacres of civilians early this year, is one of several areas in western Algeria where elite soldiers, backed by helicopter gunships and artillery, have waged a large-scale offensive

against rebel strongholds since the beginning of September.

Algeria has been beset by violence since early 1992 when the authorities cancelled a general election in which Islamists had taken a commanding lead.

La Nouvelle Republique and Le Quotidien d'Oran said troops were extending their offensive into the forests and mountains of Tlemcen and Sidi Bel Abbes, near Mascara town, as well as in the neighbouring areas of Tissemsilt and Ain Defla to the southwest.

"The troops have been pounding the gunmen with heavy artillery and helicopter gunships in Al Main mountain since Saturday," Le Quotidien reported on Monday.

There was no immediate confirmation of the reports from official or independent sources.

The operation would be the biggest since July last year when troops launched a major offensive on rebel strongholds in rich farming lands around Algiers to try and flush out the guerrillas.

Rebels meanwhile ambushed an army patrol on Monday in the Boumerdes region, 40 kilometres east of Algiers, killing two soldiers and wounding "several others," Liberte newspaper said on Tuesday.

Five rebels were killed on Monday when troops stormed their hideout in the Fouka area of the coastal province of Tipaza, 55 kilometres west of Algiers, it said.

Two more rebels were shot dead on Monday in Hadjout town in the same province in a clash with police, Le Matin daily said, adding that two policemen were wounded.



HIZBOLLAH ATTACK ON ISRAELI TROOPS: An Israeli military vehicle lies burned out Tuesday after Hizbollah guerrillas detonated a roadside bomb near an Israeli column in the Habiye village inside Israel's occupation zone in south Lebanon on Monday. The blast killed two Israeli soldiers and wounded three others, an Israeli backed militia source said (Reuters photo)

## Islamic decree bans Arabs from Israeli army duty

TEL AVIV (AFP) — An Islamic cleric has issued a religious decree barring Arabs from serving in Israel's army, the Haaretz newspaper reported on Tuesday.

Sheikh Sami Abu Freih, an influential religious leader among bedouins living in Israel's southern Negev desert, issued the decree, or fatwa, on Friday following violent Israeli Arab protests late last month against land confiscation.

"The fatwa rules that anyone who enlists in a conquering army, not only the Israeli army, shall be considered a heretic," Haaretz quoted Sheikh Abu Freih as saying.

Arab citizens of Israel, most of whom are Muslim, can join Israel's army voluntarily but they are not subject to mandatory conscription as are Jewish Israelis.

Many bedouins serve in the army, mostly as scouts, but other Arab Israelis avoid military service.

Sheikh Abu Freih said he issued the decree after hearing that bedouin soldiers took part in putting down rioting last month in the Arab Israeli town of Um Al Fahem.

"A situation has been created in which members of our community volunteer to serve in an army that expropriates their lands for training," Sheikh Abu Freih said.

## Sudan's Bashir warns of reprisals for alleged Ugandan attacks

KHARTOUM (AFP) — President Omar Al Bashir of Sudan has threatened to launch attacks in Uganda, claiming troops from the neighbouring country were involved in clashes in south Sudan, press reports said Tuesday.

"The battle with [Ugandan President Yoweri] Museveni will not be confined to the bushes of south Sudan," General Bashir was quoted as saying Monday night by the Akhbar Al Yawm newspaper.

Bashir has repeatedly accused Ugandan forces of supporting the rebel Sudanese People's Liberation Army (SPLA), which is currently active in East Equatoria district in the south.

Similar accusations have been levelled against Eritrea and, in a press report Tuesday, Sudanese army spokesman General Abdul Rahman Siral

Khetim said "mercenaries from Tanzania" were involved in the East Equatoria fighting.

Eritrea also stands accused of shelling Sudanese villages near the border between the two countries, leading to the displacement of more than 60,000 people, according to state governor Ibrahim Mahmoud Hamid, quoted in the Khartoum press Tuesday.

Hamid said although "cautious calm" prevailed along the eastern border areas, he expected an attack "at any moment," claiming that Eritrean and rebel forces were "amassed" on the Eritrean side of the border.

He added that Sudanese government forces and militias were prepared to "repel any act of aggression."

Bashir, who was speaking at a ceremony in honour of a cousin killed in the East Equatoria fighting, said he had cancelled a meeting with the

Ugandan president slated for last September after "Museveni launched an attack on East Equatoria."

Khartoum and the SPLA on Monday postponed a U.N.-sponsored meeting scheduled to be held this week in Nairobi to extend a humanitarian ceasefire.

Bashir vowed that the current fighting would only stop at Kampala and warned that peace talks with the SPLA would only be held after the rebels had been defeated.

Noting that the next round of talks was due in six months, Bashir said the period was "enough for beating and breaking the backbone of the rebellion."

SPLA leader John Garang "will then come to the negotiations humiliated, disgraced and defeated," he said.

## Factions face off in Tehran ahead of election

TEHRAN (R) — Rival political factions face off in the streets of Tehran on Tuesday in a prelude to an election for a powerful state body which alone can appoint and dismiss Iran's supreme leader.

About 3,000 leftist Islamic students held a rally outside the gates of Tehran University to protest against the rejection by the conservative-dominated guardian council of some of the moderates who had signed up to run for the Assembly of Experts.

They were confronted by about 40 hard-line conservatives. But there were no clashes, in contrast to previous confrontations between student backers of President Mohammad Khatami and groups of activist hardliners who fear his political and social reforms will dilute the principles of Iran's Islamic revolution.

The rally was held on the eve of the official announcement of the list of candidates permitted to seek places on the 86-member Assembly of Experts on Oct. 23.

Political analysts said the nationwide

poll could prove a watershed in a struggle between Khatami, the moderate cleric elected in May 1997, and diehard conservatives.

Many candidates have been disqualified by the guardian council's six Shiite Muslim clerics and six jurists which officially only examined their qualifications as religious experts with a good grasp of politics.

But moderates have accused the council of acting along factional lines, a charge denied by the powerful body.

One of those who failed to pass the screening process was Hadi Khamenei, a younger brother of supreme leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei. The leftist cleric and newspaper publisher told students at the rally: "Is it accidental that all the [reformist] candidates... have been rejected?"

The pro-Khatami students hailed the president as a symbol of national unity and demanded he be granted more power, in line with his wide popular mandate.

Hardliners beat their chests in support of supreme leader Khamenei and chanted: "Leader, leader, we won't let you perish."

Nearly 400 people signed up to run for the assembly, a solely canonical body. Some 150 have been approved, newspapers reported. A two-week election campaign starts on Thursday.

The run-up to the election has opened a window onto the most sensitive subject in Iran — Khamenei's qualification to hold the country's highest office.

As supreme leader, Khamenei commands a parallel government which shadows Khatami's administration of moderate technocrats.

He is widely believed to be close to conservatives defeated in a seismic political shift at last year's presidential election.

The appointed leader wields far more power than the elected president. Khamenei is commander-in-chief of the armed forces, determines foreign policy and controls the state media.

## Taleban suggest Afghan-Saudi committee to discuss Ben Laden

ABU DHABI (AFP) — Afghanistan's Taleban militia on Tuesday refused a Saudi demand to extradite Saudi dissident Osama Ben Laden but proposed the creation of an Afghan-Saudi body to discuss the issue.

"Saudi Arabia officially asked us, before the U.S. raid [on Afghanistan], to hand over Osama Ben Laden, but we refused," Wakil Ahmad Mutawakkil, a spokesman for the Taleban in Abu Dhabi, told AFP.

He said that there was "no proof that Ben Laden is

implicated in the anti-American attacks in Nairobi and Dar es Salaam," and that the Taleban has no extradition agreements with any country.

"We propose the creation of a committee of Saudi and Afghan religious figures, who will study the issue and we will accept its conclusions," Mutawakkil said.

He added that the United States had also approached the Taleban, via their embassy in Islamabad, for Ben Laden's extradition.

Ben Laden has been accused by the U.S. State Department of being responsible for anti-U.S. bombings in Saudi Arabia as well as the twin U.S. embassy bombings in east Africa that left 258 dead and several thousand wounded.

Saudi Arabia, Pakistan and the United Arab Emirates are the only countries to recognise the Taleban as the legitimate rulers of Afghanistan.

But Riyadh expelled the Taleban's charge d'affaires

from the kingdom on Sept. 23 and recalled its own charge d'affaires from Kabul.

The Taleban's spokesman, who has been in Abu Dhabi for a week, said he had met the U.N. special envoy for Afghanistan, Lakdar Ibrahim, on Thursday in the UAE capital.

Ibrahimi, an Algerian diplomat, is visiting the region for talks on defusing tension between Tehran and the Taleban.

## NEWS IN BRIEF

### Iraq names new ambassadors

CAIRO (AP) — Iraq has named new ambassadors to Turkey, Morocco and Yemen following a major diplomatic reshuffle. President Saddam Hussein ordered in June, Arab diplomats said Tuesday. Deputy Foreign Minister Abdul Jabbar Al Douiri was named ambassador to Morocco and Farouk Hjjazi, a senior intelligence officer, will be the new Iraqi ambassador to Turkey, the diplomats said. Sabah Yassin, the former head of the Radio and Television Organisation, will be head of the Iraqi mission to Yemen.

### 'U.S. embassy may be target'

DUBAI (R) — The U.S. embassy in Saudi Arabia said on Tuesday a "terrorist" attack might be planned on the mission. It did not say when the attack might take place. But in a statement, the Riyadh embassy said it and the consulates in Jeddah and Dhahran would be closed to the public on Wednesday "to

review present security measures and to implement physical security enhancements." The statement said various U.S. missions around the world had received threats of "possible terrorist activity directed against them" following the bombings of the American embassies in Nairobi and Dar es Salaam on Aug. 7.

### Strike paralyses Algiers airport

ALGIERS (R) — Workers of Algeria's state-owned Air Algiers staged a strike for a second day on Tuesday, bringing Algiers airport to a virtual standstill, officials said. "Yes, the stoppage started late on Monday at a short notice and almost all flights for both international and domestic routes were cancelled on Tuesday," said an airport spokesman. She was unable to say whether the strike had affected Algeria's other airports, such as Oran, in the west, at the eastern city of Constantine or the oil producing region of Hassi Massaud.

## JORDAN TELEVISION

Tel. 4773111-19

### PROGRAMME TWO

15:10 "The Adventures of Teddy Ruxpin"  
15:30 Children's Programme — Halfway to Cross the Galaxy and Turn Left  
16:00 French Documentary  
16:30 Master of the Maze  
17:00 Doc. — Ushuaia  
18:15 Wind at My Back (Ep.5)  
19:00 Le Journal  
19:15 Science Magazine — E-M6  
19:30 News headlines  
19:35 Comedy — Keeping Mum  
20:00 Doc. — Envoy Special Magazine  
21:10 Great Moments of Science and Technology  
21:30 Faces and Places  
20:30 King Fu  
22:00 News in English  
22:30 Chicago Hope (Ep.11)  
23:59 Drama — Bugs  
01:00 End of T.X.

### PRAYER TIMES

04:12 Fajr  
05:29 (Sunrise) Dhuha  
11:23 Dhuhr  
14:44 Asr  
17:18 Maghreb  
18:35 Isha

### CHURCHES

St. Mary of Nazareth Church

## JORDAN TIMES DAILY GUIDE AND CALENDAR

Sweilfeh, Tel. 5920740

Assemblies of God Church Tel. 4632785

St. Joseph Church Tel. 4624590

Terra Sancta Church Tel. 4622366

Anglican Church Tel. 4624853/4624811

St. Afrem Syrian Orthodox Church Tel. 4771751

Amman International Church Tel. 5865897

German-speaking Evangelical Congregation Tel. 5688404

The Evangelical Local Church in Amman Tel. 5811295

Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints Tel. 4654932

St. John the Baptist at De la Salle College Tel. 5661757

Church of the Annunciation Tel. 4637440

Greek Orthodox Church Tel. 4646138

Church of Presentation, Sweilfeh Tel. 5920146

The United Catholic Church Tel. 4624757

The English-Language Catholic Parish Tel. 4614190

Evangelical Free Church Tel. 4892679

The Baptist Church Tel. 4628052

The Armenian Catholic Church Tel. 4771331

The Armenian Orthodox Church Tel. 4775261

### WEATHER

Bulletin supplied by the Department of Meteorology

Moderate conditions will prevail with temperatures around average and winds northwesterly moderate. In Aqaba, winds will be northerly active, and seas calm.

Amman 18/28

Aqaba 22/33

Deserts 14/31

Jordan Valley 19/35

Yesterday's high temperatures: Amman 28, Aqaba 34

Humidity readings: Amman 40 per cent, Aqaba 28 per cent.

Following are the highest temperatures expected today in the following areas:

Ajloun 24

Jerash 30

Um Qays 29

Madaba 28

Petra 30

Dead Sea 36

### USEFUL TELEPHONE NUMBERS

NIGHT DUTY

Dr. Khalid Abdo 4657129

Dr. Bassam Karadshah 4389200

Dr. Khalid Masri 5661144

Dr. Ramzi Mazzawi 4894788

Firas pharmacy 5661912

Al Asema pharmacy 4637055

Al Salam pharmacy 4636730

Yacoub pharmacy 4644945

Shameisani pharmacy 4637660

Nabrook pharmacy 4633672

Naib pharmacy 5347632

IRBID:

Dr. Ghazi Ta'ameh 250080

Al Quds pharmacy (—)

ZARQA:

Dr. Isma'il Tallawi 903469

Khalifeh pharmacy 985417

### EMERGENCIES

Food Control Centre 4637111

Civil Defence Department 5661111

Civil Defence Immediate Rescue 4630341

Civil Defence Emergency 199

Rescue Police 192, 4621111, 4637777

Fire Brigade 4617101

Blood Bank 4775121

Highway Police 5343402

Traffic Police 4896390

Public Security Dept. 4630321

Price Complaints 5661176

Water & Sewage Complaints 4897467

Amman Municipality Complaints 4787111

Telephone Information (directory assistance) 121

Overseas Calls 010230

Central Amman Telephone Repairs 4623101

Abdali Tel. Repairs 5661101

Jordan Television 4773111

Radio Jordan 4774111

Water Authority 5680100

J. Electricity Authority 5815615

Electric Power Co. 4636381

RJ Flight Information 44-53200

Queen Alia Intl. Airport 44-53200

### HOSPITALS

AMMAN:

The Arab Centre for Heart and Special Surgery 5921199

The Islamic, Abdali 5666131/7

Husseini Medical Centre Tel. 585856

Luzmila 4630195

Khalidi Maternity 4644281/6

Akileh Maternity 4642441/2

Jabal Amman Maternity 4642362

Malhass, J. Amman 4636140

Palestine, Shameisani 5607071

Shameisani Hospital 5669131

University Hospital 5353444

Al-Muassher Hospital 5667227/9

Al-Ahli, Abdali 5664164/6

Italian, Al-Muhajreen 4777101/3

Al-Bashir 4775111/26

Army, Marka 4891611/15

Queen Alia Hospital 5602240/50

Amal Hospital 5674155

ZARQA:

Zarqa Govt. Hospital (09)983323

Zarqa National Hospital (09)900560

Ibn Sina Hospital (09)986732

Al Hikma Modern Hospital (09)990999

IRBID:

Princess Basma Hospital (02)275555

Greek Catholic Hospital (02)272275

Ibn Al Nafees Hospital (02)247100

AQABA:

Princess Haya Hospital (03)314111

FOR THE TRAVELLER

QUEEN ALIA

INTERNATIONAL

AIRPORT

This information is supplied by Royal Jordanian (RJ) information department at the Queen Alia International Airport Tel. (44)53200 where it should always be verified.

Information on other flights are supplied on phone 44 (52700) or 44(53250).

### ARRIVALS

Royal Jordanian (RJ) Flights



## Wind energy system design wins approval

AMMAN (J.T.) — The Royal Scientific Society has been awarded a statement of approval for the prototype testing of a wind energy conversion system that the RSS developed earlier this year, according to a society statement.

The RSS, with support from the German Technical Cooperation Agency (GTZ), designed and developed a mechanical wind pumping system for water pumping purposes that was approved by a German technical group, it added.

The society has also signed a concession agreement with a private-sector company to manufacture the pumps and market them, said the statement.

The Kharrana station, an RSS Renewable Energy Research Center field testing area, is one station where energy converting systems have been installed and tested. After the testing, the system will be transferred to permanent sites, according to the announcement.

The society has developed and implemented a number of applied projects in the field of wind energy to transfer such technology and adjust it to meet local conditions, the statement added.



HRH Crown Prince Hassan, the Regent, Tuesday meets with the bishop of the Arab Evangelical Episcopal Church of Jerusalem and the Middle East, Riyadh Abul Asul (Photo by Boghos)

## Crown Prince receives new Jerusalem, Middle East bishop

AMMAN (J.T.) — His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan, the Regent, on Tuesday received the newly appointed bishop of the Arab Evangelical Episcopal Church of Jerusalem and the Middle East, Riyadh Abul Asul, and his accompanying delegation.

The bishop spoke of the "difficult" circumstances facing the Christian community, which he said have forced large numbers of them to emigrate.

Prince Hassan emphasised the need for Arab Christians to hold on to their lands and their Arab identity and for efforts to be made to protect the Christian and Muslim character of Jerusalem.

Bishop Riyadh voiced appreciation of His Majesty King Hussein's and Prince Hassan's support for Arab Christians and the Jordanian policy enhancing the historic links and common values between Muslims and Christians.

The bishop also wished the King a speedy recovery.

The five-member delegation representing the standing committee of the Church Council of the Arab Evangelical Episcopal Church arrived in Amman for a two-day meeting, the first under Bishop Riyadh. He was appointed to his post on August 15, 1998, succeeding Bishop Samir Qafetzi, who retired.

The standing committee holds four meetings annually, each in a different location.

## Lower House urges diplomatic solution to Turkey-Syria crisis

AMMAN (J.T.) — The Lower House of Parliament issued a statement Tuesday urging Syria and Turkey to deal with their current crisis through diplomatic means and avoid a military confrontation.

"The Lower House of Parliament is following with deep concern the reports about the escalation of tension between Syria and Turkey at a time when the Middle East is going through very critical circumstances," said the statement.

It said Jordan calls for a maximum degree of cooperation and solidarity among the countries of the region to confront the danger.

"The Lower House, which believes in and calls for dialogue as a means for settling disputes and realises the dangers inherent in the threat of the use of force between the two neighbouring countries, sincerely calls for serious and sincere efforts to contain the crisis and settle it through diplomatic means based on the principle of brotherly ties and common interests," the statement added.

Parliament appealed to all governments and parliamentary organisations as well as influential nations in the world to work toward defusing the crisis and preventing a further escalation, which it

said would open the way for external intervention.

The statement expressed support for the efforts on the part of His Majesty King Hussein, HRH Crown Prince Hassan, the Regent, and the Jordanian government to reach a peaceful solution to the crisis.

The Lower House warned against unrelenting stands and called on Turkey to halt its threats of military action and pursue the path of diplomatic dialogue based on good intentions to settle the dispute.

The statement called for the establishment of good relations between the two neighbouring states based on solidarity and cooperation and

urged the two sides to exploit their potentials for the benefit and prosperity of their peoples.

The Parliament statement was issued one day after Prince Hassan called Turkish President Suleyman Demirel by telephone to urge him to reach a peaceful settlement to the crisis with Syria.

Turkey has accused Syria of sheltering Kurdish rebels, allowing them to continue battling Turkish security forces from cross-border bases. Syria has denied the accusation, claiming for its part that Turkey has been diverting water from the Euphrates River.

## WHO expert rules out human error in vaccine scare — health minister

AMMAN (J.T.) — A World Health Organisation expert who investigated the causes for the symptoms that affected students last week after they received school vaccinations concluded that there was nothing wrong with the delivery, transfer, storage, refrigeration or administration procedures, Health Minister Nael Ajlouni said Tuesday.

Speaking at a press briefing, Ajlouni said the WHO expert confirmed the competence of the personnel who administered the vaccines.

Ajlouni referred to a report

yesterday that students in Cyprus developed symptoms similar to those of the Jordanian students, including dizziness, nausea and swelling. The report said 48 Cypriot students out of 140 students who developed the symptoms were hospitalised and received medical treatment over three days, according to the minister.

He noted that the vaccines administered to the Cypriot students were produced in Switzerland, while the ones used in Jordan originated from Hungary.

This, he said, indicates that

such symptoms are normal with the vaccine but vary in their intensity.

The Cypriot health ministry has withdrawn the vaccines and sent samples abroad for examination, Ajlouni said.

On a report by a committee formed last week to investigate the scare, which affected more than 500 students, Ajlouni said all the children admitted to hospital had their cases considered natural reactions to the vaccine.

Investigations, however, are still under way and the ministry is waiting for the

results of the tests of samples sent to the WHO in Geneva, he added.

In an interview with the Jordan Times last week, Ajlouni said the symptoms developed by most students who were admitted to hospital were normal following such vaccinations, although the number of cases of high susceptibility to the vaccine was slightly higher than average.

He ruled out the possibility that the adverse effects of the vaccines could have been caused by improper storage or refrigeration.

## NEWS IN BRIEF

### Prince Mohammad visits War College

AMMAN (Petra) — His Royal Highness Prince Mohammad, His Majesty King Hussein's personal representative, called Tuesday at the Royal War College, where he was briefed by the college's commander on its duties and functions. Prince Mohammad also toured the college's various divisions.

### Prince Faisal opens exhibition

AMMAN (Petra) — His Royal Highness Prince Faisal on Tuesday opened the 1998 Middle East Telecommunications Exhibition at the Amman International Show in Marj Al Hammam. Prince Faisal toured the exhibition, which includes the latest telecommunications equipment. About 20 Jordanian and foreign companies are taking part in the exhibition, which lasts until Oct. 9.

### IPU president concludes visit

SOUTH SHOUNEH (Petra) — The president of the International Parliamentary Union, Miguel Martinez, concluded a three-day official visit during which he held talks with His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan, the Regent, the speakers of the Lower and Upper Houses of Parliament, and other senior officials.

### PSD director meets with French ambassador

AMMAN (Petra) — Public Security Department Director General Nasouh Muhieddin received French Ambassador to Jordan Bernard Enrie and discussed cooperation in police fields.



BADIA FORCES PATROL AT JORDANIAN-SYRIAN BORDER: Camel riders from the Badia Forces patrol the desert Tuesday near the Syrian border to check for smugglers. Camels are now used mainly along a 65-km stretch of the Syrian border strewn with black basalt rock which cannot be patrolled by car (Reuters photo)

## Minister requests assistance from intellectual property rights group

AMMAN (J.T.) — Minister of Industry and Trade Mohammad Saleh Horani on Tuesday called on the Geneva-based World Intellectual Property Organisation to extend legal and technical training to Jordanian personnel to facilitate application of the organisation's regulations. Addressing the opening session of a three-day seminar in Amman organised by WIPO, the minister said such assistance, through the Ministry of Industry and Trade, can help the country build the necessary infrastructure for compliance with the

organisation's requirements.

Horani said the ministry has been developing its trained personnel to establish an effective WIPO-related system administratively and technically.

He noted that this assistance is needed by Jordan, which is trying to accede to the World Trade Organisation.

Sharif Saadallah, a representative of the organisation, presented a briefing on WIPO's endeavours to protect industrial, scientific and technical rights.

The organisation, which was established in 1967,

aims to promote the protection of intellectual property in the world through cooperation among states and, where appropriate, with other international organisations.

It also centralises the administration of unions that deal with legal and technical aspects of intellectual property.

Intellectual property comprises two main branches: industrial property, chiefly inventions, trademarks and designs, and copyrights, mainly literary, musical, artistic, photographic and cinematographic works.

## Hungarian president calls for stronger Jordan-Hungary ties

BUDAPEST (Petra) — Hungarian President Arpad Gönz has expressed his country's desire to bolster relations with Jordan and suggested that the two countries renew a memorandum of understanding to strengthen bilateral cultural and scientific cooperation.

The president, who made the statement at a ceremony to accept the credentials of Mazen Armouti as non-resident ambassador to Hungary, said he hoped that the concerned authorities in the two countries would work toward drawing up executive programmes to expand cooperation in political, economic, cultural and investment fields as well as trade.

Gönz said the visit of HRH Crown Prince Hassan, the Regent, to Hungary last year and the Hungarian foreign minister's visit to Jordan in 1995 helped further bolster bilateral ties.

He added that Hungary, as a future member of both the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation and the European Union, can help Jordan at the bilateral and regional levels.

Gönz thanked His Majesty King Hussein for his endeavours in the Middle East peace process and wished the King a quick recovery and the Jordanian people further prosperity.

Armouti, who is also Jordan's ambassador to Austria, met the Hungarian foreign minister and other officials to discuss trade exchanges between Jordan and Hungary.

The two sides agreed to increase the volume of trade beyond the current \$10 million annually and to arrange for reciprocal exchanges of visits by representatives of chambers of trade and industry. They also agreed to work out an understanding on loan guarantees between the Hungarian import and export bank and the Jordanian Housing Bank to facilitate trade exchanges and to reach an agreement on tourism.

The two sides also decided to revise the provisions of a draft agreement on combating crime and acts of terrorism due to be signed in Amman during the Hungarian foreign minister's upcoming visit to Jordan and to open embassies in each country's capital.

## Proposal for Arab development report welcomed

By Hind-Lara Mango

MANAMA — A proposal by Her Royal Highness Princess Basma for the formulation of an annual Arab Human Development Report to monitor development processes and formulate human development strategies was well received at a conference here to launch the UNDP's 1998 Human Development Report.

"We are very pleased by Princess Basma's proposal. This initiative ties in with United Nations Development Programme [UNDP] policies for promoting and finding new approaches to human development and consumption through participatory means," said assistant administrator and director of the UNDP Regional Bureau for Arab States, Fawaz Foukalah.

The UNDP is intensifying strategies to involve governments and civil society in drawing up human development strategies, he added.

"Human development means putting people at the centre of development and strengthening their capabilities by asking them what their basic needs are," said Richard Jolly, principal author and coordinator of the HDR.

This year's report, focusing on the theme of global consumption, noted that world consumption reached \$24 trillion in 1998. The wealthiest 20 per cent of the world's population account for 86 per cent of total private consumption, while the poorest 20 per cent account for only 1.3 per

cent, the report said.

Published for the past nine years by the UNDP, the report ranks developing and industrialised countries according to the Human Development Index, which is based on three socio-economic indicators: life expectancy, adult literacy, and per capita income.

Jordan is classified as a medium human development country, ranking 87 out of 174 states and number 12 among Arab countries.

Despite the country's accomplishments in literacy and life expectancy, Jordan's per capita income continues to be low and has affected its HDI rank, which fell three places from 84 last year. Jordan's drop was also affected by the fact that other countries, such as Turkey, Oman and Cyprus, moved up the ranks this year.

Canada remained in the lead for the second consecutive year, while Bahrain ranked the highest among Arab countries for the fourth consecutive year.

"Bahrain has been following the philosophy on how best to make use of human development through training and education. Our policies have focused on integrating human development with economic development and ensuring that educational goals meet market demands," said Mohammad Ibrahim Mutawa, Bahraini minister of cabinet affairs and information.

At the launching of the HDR in Jordan last month,

Princess Basma noted that to decrease the widening gap between rich and poor, human development should be based on consumption patterns of shared resources, equity, and social responsibility.

According to UNDP statistics, an estimated one-third of the Jordanian population lives in poverty. The government has been implementing the Social Productivity Programme to fight poverty and unemployment with UNDP support.

The report pointed out positive and negative aspects of consumption, noting that increased consumption has resulted in social exclusion and environmental damage. One challenge is the slow economic growth rate, which it said is leading to fewer resources available for human development, including health care and education.

The report touched upon the threat of population growth exceeding economic growth. It called for striking a balance between population and economic growth to maintain high standards of development.

A seven-point agenda in the report recommended that every country implement a consumption policy. In this context, Jordan was hailed for hosting the first Arab conference on consumer protection last week.

"We emphasise that if two and a half billion people in the world have too little consumption, countries must give priority to the under-

consumption of those who have too little," Jolly told the Jordan Times.

The report noted that many states were moving towards systems where market mechanisms were used as the primary tool to influence behaviour. This policy stresses that if human behaviour was harmful to others or the environment, prices should be increased through eco-pricing.

This global approach is being followed by some developing countries, yet there remain many, including Jordan, who have been "timid" in their use of this "green-tax."

The role of the media was underlined in raising awareness on the dangers of over-consumption. A regional seminar on Human Development and the Media in Arab Countries was held Tuesday in Bahrain. Over 33 media representatives from all over the Arab World participated in this event.

A lecture entitled "Consumption and the Media in Arab Countries" was delivered by Raifa Hassan Al Sharqi, executive director of the Centre for Applied Research and Women Studies at the University of Sana'a in Yemen.

From Jordan, Iyad Abu Moghli, director of the Environment and Natural Resources Programme at the UNDP, will present a paper today on "The Impact of Consumption of Natural Resources on the Environment in Arab Countries."

## what's going on

**FILM**  
\* "Nada menos que todo un hombre" (In Spanish) at Instituto Cervantes, Jabel Amman on Thursday Oct. 8 at 5:00 p.m. (Tel. 4610858).  
**PIANO CONCERT**  
\* Piano concert by Al-Lujaym Piano Trio Rula Nabli, Tariq Younis, and Tala Tounjji (sponsored by Goethe-Institut in cooperation with the Jerusalem Forum) at the Royal Cultural Centre at 8:00 p.m.  
**DARAT AL FUNUN SUMMER 98 FESTIVAL**  
\* "Summer 98" cultural activities at Darat Al Funun, Jabel Weibdeh, to last until Oct. 8, include:  
**EXHIBITIONS**  
\* 30 years of graphic art from Lebanon and works by Jordanian artist Sahel Hiri at the Main House.  
\* Works by Iraqi artist Samir Usama and by Jordanian artist Said Haddadin at the Blue House.  
\* Installation works by Jordanian artist Samia Zaru at the Byzantine Church.  
\* Exhibition of photographs "Memory of a Place" by Jordanian artist Hussein Da'eh at the Museum.

and Antiquity Agel Biliuji at the Orthodox Club, Abdoun at 7:00 p.m.  
**EXHIBITIONS**  
\* Works by Lania Juma at the French Cultural Centre, Jabel Weibdeh, until Oct. 26.  
\* Art of Arab calligraphy by Nassar Mansour at the Jordan National Gallery of Fine Arts (Tel. 4630128), until Oct. 23.  
\* Paintings by Iraqi artist Tala Mikha'il at the Royal Cultural Centre, until Oct. 8.  
\* Amman Seventh International Book Exhibit at the City Hall, Ras Al-Ain, until Oct. 10.

\* Works by graduates of the Arts Centre (including ceramics, paintings, and sculpture) at the centre, Mahmoud Irani St. (Tel. 5529619), until Oct. 8.  
**ANNUAL BAZAAR**  
\* Annual bazaar, sponsored by the diplomatic corps in Jordan, at the Greater Amman Hall, Al Hussein Sports City on Thursday Oct. 8 from 11:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. (Proceeds will go to Mabarrat Um Al Hussein Orphanage).  
**NATIONAL CULTURAL HERITAGE WEEK**  
\* Ceremony of the first National Cultural Heritage Week at the Amman Citadel, Umayyad Palace entrance hall on Friday Oct. 9 at 7:30 p.m. (It will be followed by a symbolic walk through historic downtown Amman to the Municipal Hall at Ras Al-Ain for an exhibition opening at 10:00 a.m.) (Tel. 5930682).

\* "Islam and Democracy" by Egyptian Islamic intellectual Mohammad Awa at Abdul Hameed Shoman Foundation, Jabel Amman at 6:30 p.m.  
\* "The Permanent Touristic Development" by Minister of Tourism

and Antiquity Agel Biliuji at the Orthodox Club, Abdoun at 7:00 p.m.

\* Works by graduates of the Arts Centre (including ceramics, paintings, and sculpture) at the centre, Mahmoud Irani St. (Tel. 5529619), until Oct. 8.

\* Annual bazaar, sponsored by the diplomatic corps in Jordan, at the Greater Amman Hall, Al Hussein Sports City on Thursday Oct. 8 from 11:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. (Proceeds will go to Mabarrat Um Al Hussein Orphanage).

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**Other Events**  
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## U.S. envoy stages shuttle diplomacy on Kosovo; Milosevic still defiant

PRISTINA, Yugoslavia (AP) — Searching for a breakthrough to avert NATO airstrikes, a senior U.S. envoy said Tuesday that President Slobodan Milosevic has not met the terms laid down by the United Nations to prevent military intervention in the secessionist Kosovo province.

Following difficult talks with Milosevic late Monday, Richard Holbrooke met in the Kosovo capital with ethnic Albanian political leaders, who have refused to negotiate with Milosevic until he halts a seven-month crackdown against separatist rebels, which has killed hundreds and driven more than a quarter-million people from their homes.

Holbrooke told reporters that Serb military police still maintain a strong presence in Kosovo despite repeated international demands for them to withdraw from areas of conflict. "U.S. diplomatic observers are doing a terrific job bringing us information, and the information they're bringing is not good," he told reporters before heading into talks with ethnic Albanian political leader Ibrahim Rugova, who says NATO airstrikes would be welcome.

Holbrooke was expected to return to Belgrade for Tuesday night meeting with Milosevic on the southern province in Serbia, the main republic of Yugoslavia. Ethnic Albanians form 90 per cent of the 2 million-strong Kosovo population, and most favour self-rule.

In Jerusalem, U.S. State Department spokesman James Rubin said Holbrooke spoke by telephone twice with Secretary of State Madeleine Albright about the results of his talks in the Yugoslav capital, Belgrade.

"President Milosevic has not agreed at this time to ... sustainable and irreversible compliance with the demands of the international community," Rubin said. "NATO military preparations and discussions and decision-making continue on a fast track," Milosevic told Holbrooke late Monday that his government is willing to seek a "political solution" to the crisis in Kosovo, where ethnic Albanian rebels are battling for independence.

But he also called the threats of aggression against Yugoslavia "a criminal act" that provide "support for the Albanian villains, not the Albanian people," according to a statement issued through state media.

His defiant comments came after a meeting in which Holbrooke told the Yugoslav president of "the grave situation we are facing." "If he thinks NATO is bluffing, if he is willing to

take that risk, all I can do is convey the views of the U.S. government," Holbrooke told reporters Tuesday in Pristina.

Holbrooke, who negotiated the 1995 agreement that ended the Bosnian war, was dispatched to the federal Yugoslav capital of Belgrade in what appeared to give Milosevic a last chance to halt his crackdown and enter talks with ethnic Albanians on the future of the province.

But there was no sign that the diplomatic deadlock was ending.

Russian Foreign Minister Igor Ivanov told the Interfax news agency that Russia, a staunch ally of Serbia, would use its veto to stop any move to approve airstrikes on Yugoslavia by the U.N. Security Council, which was set to take up Kosovo later Tuesday.

The United States is trying to get Milosevic and the ethnic Albanians to agree on a deal that would defer for two or three years a decision on whether Kosovo would separate from Serbia.

But the ethnic Albanians have refused to negotiate with Milosevic, and Albright voiced scepticism Milosevic would adhere to any such plan in any case.

"We are dealing with someone we never trusted," Albright told reporters en route from Washington to Jerusalem.

## Hands off our troops in Bosnia, NATO says

SARAJEVO (AFP) — The NATO-led peacekeeping force in Bosnia said Tuesday it would respond to any threats made against its 30,000-plus troops if NATO carries out air strikes over Kosovo.

"SFOR will not tolerate any threats or intimidation against SFOR forces in Bosnia-Herzegovina," Stabilisation Force (SFOR) spokesman Lieutenant-Commander Glenn Chamberlain told a press briefing in Sarajevo. "SFOR will hold the persons or their leaders who tolerate, advocate or direct threats of this nature personally responsible and will take the appropriate action," he said. Last week Serbia's deputy prime minister, Vojislav Seselj, declared that NATO troops "will be our enemies everywhere" if the alliance tried to use force to halt the violence in Kosovo.

He did not refer to SFOR specifically, but his remarks were interpreted as being directed at the 34-nation force that enforces the Dayton accords which ended the 1992-95 war in Bosnia-Herzegovina.

In a just-released travel warning, the U.S. State Department urged Americans to "consider departing" Bosnia's Serb entity of Republika Srpska, as they might be targets of retaliation if NATO intervention goes ahead.

In the entity's main city of Banja Luka, the political party led by outgoing Republika Srpska President Biljana Plavcic said it was opposed to NATO striking targets in the rump Yugoslavia (Serbia and Montenegro). "It is not right to punish the people," Ostoja Knezevic, vice president of the Serb People's Alliance (SNS), told reporters.

"We favour negotiations," he said, adding that a NATO attack would have a negative impact on Republika Srpska, which covers 49 per cent of Bosnia including areas that border on Serbia.

Similar opposition came from Bosnian Serb Premier Milorad Dodik's Party of Independent Social Democrats (SNSD), whose spokesman Stanislaw Cadjio said NATO action would be "dangerous for stability in the region."

"It is special in Bosnia-Herzegovina, because whenever there are some problems in neighbouring countries, the situation is influenced here," Cadjio said.

A representative of the Kosovo Liberation Army Tuesday urged NATO to intervene. Adem Demaci, who resigned as KLA spokesman last month but said he was again speaking for the rebels, said: "The Serb war machine and its military and political structure must be destroyed."

NATO officials say they are ready to launch airstrikes within hours of receiving an order to attack. No final decision is expected until Thursday, when ambassadors of the allied countries gather for a NATO Council meeting in Brussels.

Russian President Boris Yeltsin continued to press for a political solution to the crisis Tuesday.

"I have spent almost two days preparing and holding telephone talks on Kosovo," he told Russian news agencies.

French President Jacques Chirac insisted that the U.N. Security Council must authorise any military intervention, but indicated that the human suffering going on might be the loophole NATO needs to go in, and that France would go along with that.

"It is necessary that the Serb forces pull out," he said in Florence, Italy. "Combat must cease. If that is not the case, a NATO intervention will become inevitable."



Singers Bette Midler (left), Barry Manilow and Rosemary Clooney pose together at the Seventh annual Ella Lifetime Achievement Award dinner hosted by the Society of Singers in Beverly Hills. Clooney, aged 70, was honoured with the Ella Award, paying tribute to her singing and acting career of the past 53 years (Reuters photo)

## Dissidents cautious on China rights pact

BEIJING (R) — Leading Chinese democracy activists Tuesday gave a wary welcome to China's signing of a U.N. covenant guaranteeing freedom of expression and protection against arbitrary arrest.

But all expressed concern Beijing would drag its feet in implementing the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights.

"I'm optimistic about the rights situation in China and welcome the signing," said veteran activist Xu Wenli. "But based on past experience, I'm not sure Beijing will not fully implement the pact." Xu noted that dozens of political prisoners remained in Chinese jails.

Another leading opposition figure worried that key elements of the protocol would not be ratified by the legislature, the National People's Congress.

"We noticed that China has expressed reservations about certain parts of the covenant governing freedom of association."

"We urge the complete implementation of the treaty," said Peng Ming, secretary of the China Development Union, an underground dissident organisation.

"Nevertheless, as a representative for many reform forces here and abroad, we are very happy with this

move." Mary Robinson, United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, welcomed China's signing of the treaty and urged its speedy ratification, repeating a request she made to President Jiang Zemin during a visit to Beijing last month.

"Ratification of the treaty and its sister instrument, the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, will signify China's international commitment to promote and protect the full range of human rights to all its citizens," Robinson said in a statement issued by her office.

Last year Beijing signed the economic, social and cultural rights treaty, but has yet to ratify the treaty.

A Hong Kong newspaper said the world was now watching to see whether China would follow its commitments under the covenant.

"The world is now watching to see how sincere Beijing will be in implementing the edicts it has set its hand to," said the South China Morning Post.

"Now that it has signed the covenants, it is under an obligation to conform to international norms, speeding reforms which respect the right to freedom of thought and action, and allowing all people to fol-

low their religious practices without political interference," it said in an editorial.

The Post said Hong Kong may prove an early testing ground for China's commitment to the covenant as Beijing can no longer bar Democratic Party members from entering the mainland.

Under article 12 of the covenant, no one may be arbitrarily deprived of the right to enter his own country, it said.

The Democratic Party, a vocal critic of the Beijing and Hong Kong governments, has been branded as "subversive" by China and most of its members have been barred from entering the mainland.

Hong Kong, a British colony for 156 years, reverted to China July last year.

China signed the rights pact on Monday in New York, just a day before British Prime Minister Tony Blair arrived in Beijing for a landmark six-day visit.

Blair, in what he called a "frank exchange of views" with Chinese Premier Zhu Rongji, raised human rights and mentioned cases of individual dissidents, including an activist who was briefly detained Monday for trying to register a human rights monitoring group.

## NEWS IN BRIEF

### U.N. outraged at Croat attacks on returning Muslims

GENEVA (R) — The U.N. High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), responsible for organising returns to Bosnia, Tuesday expressed outrage at attacks on minority Muslims returning to pre-war homes in Croat-controlled Bosnia. Spokesman Kris Janowski told a news briefing that several episodes over the past week south of the Bosnian town of Mostar, including a fatal one, were a "setback for minority returns." In the most serious incident, a Muslim man was killed and three people injured last Friday when a grenade was thrown at a home for displaced in Tasovcici. Three other explosions were reported that night in the same village. The next day, a rocket-propelled grenade hit a home in Aladinici in Stolac district, but there were no injuries. "It is really sad that people returning home are being killed nearly three years after Dayton was signed," Janowski said, referring to the peace accord under which UNHCR was mandated to organise the return of displaced persons. "Bosnian Croats have a very bad reputation as far as welcoming back returnees are concerned... The atmosphere is essentially dense with hostility. But this is the first lethal attack in quite some time," the spokesman added. Some 8,000 Muslims were forcibly evacuated from Stolac by Croat forces during the war before the two communities signed a ceasefire in 1994. About 100 families have gone home since, according to the Geneva-based UNHCR, which was the lead humanitarian agency during the 1992-95 Bosnian war. "People are staying, trying to hang on to their homes," Janowski said. "But there is a lot of fear. Many in Stolac have returned under the protection and huge pressure of the international community on Bosnian Croats who are very persistently refusing to give minorities fair and reasonable treatment."

### Germany's CDU nominate Schaeuble as new leader

BONN (R) — Germany's Christian Democrats nominated Wolfgang Schaeuble Tuesday as the new leader of their battered party after their crushing election defeat. CDU parliamentary leader Schaeuble, in a wheelchair since he was paralysed by a gunman in 1990, secured the backing of his parliamentary group at a meeting in Bonn to succeed Chancellor Helmut Kohl, a source in the party said. The source said the group had voted unanimously in favour of Schaeuble with one abstention. CDU delegates were expected to give their final stamp of approval to his nomination at a party congress on Nov. 7. Schaeuble was the only candidate in the running to replace Kohl, the CDU chairman for the last 25 years, who resigned after losing the Sept. 27 general election. Kohl became the first German chancellor to be voted out of office when he lost to Gerhard Schröder's Social Democrats (SPD). The CDU plunged more than six points to 35.2 per cent of the vote, the lowest electoral performance since 1949. Schaeuble, 56, is widely respected in the party. But his nomination was marred, ironically, by Kohl when the outgoing chancellor said last week that Schaeuble would replace him. Many younger party leaders who have long chafed under Kohl's dominating rule were offended that the 68-year-old was still trying to pull the strings even after stepping down. Kohl has kept the CDU in power for the last 16 years, but the electoral debacle last month exposed deep rifts in the party that has dominated the country for the last 50 years.

### Radioactive mushroom scare in Bulgaria, Romania

SOFIA (AFP) — Bulgarian authorities confirmed Tuesday that mushrooms tainted with radioactive Cesium 137 had been discovered in the south of the country, following a similar scare in neighbouring Romania. Meanwhile, 22 people were reported to have been hospitalised in Romania after eating "genetically modified" mushrooms, although it was not confirmed they were radioactive. In Bulgaria, scientists registered levels of up to 900 becquerels in a load of export-bound mushrooms in the southern Rhodopes region, said scientist Petar Konstantinov. The contamination was the highest level recorded in the country since the 1986 Chernobyl nuclear accident in Ukraine, he said, adding that the normally accepted level is 475 becquerels. The source of the radioactive isotope has not been found. The tainted mushrooms were destroyed, he said, declining to name the export firm involved. The Bulgarian scare came after Romanian experts last week acknowledged that mushrooms exported to several European Union countries had been contaminated by Cesium-137, although they said the levels were not a health threat. In the latest scare, 22 people were in hospital Tuesday in Ploiesti, 100 km north of Bucharest, after having eaten mushrooms "which had undergone genetic modifications," doctors said. "We have seen a sharp rise in hospitalisations of people having eaten mushrooms which are normally edible over the last year," said Dan Pasculescu, head of the emergency department of the town's hospital. He said it was impossible to say whether the mushrooms involved were contaminated with radioactivity. France last month withdrew several tonnes of Romanian and Belarussian mushrooms imported via Austria and Italy, after controls revealed radiation levels of up to 5,000 becquerel, much higher than normal.

### Teenager accused of rape freed after year in jail

PHILADELPHIA (AP) — A 16-year-old who spent a year in jail for rape has been freed after DNA evidence indicated he couldn't have committed the crime. Gregory Wilburn walked out of the Northeast House of Correction Monday. He had been there since he was charged because his family couldn't post the \$50,000 bail. "I'm just happy that I'm with my family again. It's been embarrassing, painful, stressful," Wilburn said. Prosecutors announced Friday they were dropping the charges after DNA found on the underwear of the 17-year-old victim didn't match Wilburn's. He was arrested two months after the girl said she was attacked in August 1997 by a man who followed her out of a convenience store. "Don't let this eat away at you the rest of your life," Common Pleas Judge Anthony J. DeFino told Wilburn. "Thank God you can go on with your life. You are now a free man." Police originally had said there wasn't enough DNA evidence on the girl's underwear for testing. But 14 months later, the public defender's office asked the police lab to check again and a small amount of DNA was found. "The real reason that he's been in jail this whole year is gross incompetence," Gilman said. He said it was too early to say whether the family will file a lawsuit.

## Myanmar junta says EU jeopardising transition to democracy

BANGKOK (AFP) — Myanmar reacted angrily Tuesday to European foreign ministers' concerns over alleged human rights abuses in the military state, saying their interference jeopardised the country's "transition to democracy." "They believe that slowing Myanmar's economic development through sanctions and boycotts will hasten the transition to democracy," a junta spokesman said in a statement sent to AFP here. "However, history compels us to be more realistic."

The official was responding to a statement from a meeting of European Union (EU) foreign ministers in Luxembourg

Monday night, expressing "deep concern" about the "deteriorating political and human rights situation" in Myanmar.

The ministers urged authorities in Yangon to "take steps towards democracy and national reconciliation" and lift "all restrictions on the freedom of movement of Daw (honourific) Aung San Suu Kyi."

Aung San Suu Kyi is the leader of the main opposition party, the National League for Democracy (NLD), which won 1990 elections in a landslide but which has never been allowed to form a government.

"There have been hundreds of political prisoners taken there," said Aung San Suu Kyi.

Foreign Minister Wolfgang Scheussel, whose country chairs the EU.

A statement issued after the ministerial meeting said the EU "is actively considering further political steps to underline its concern."

"The EU recalls its condemnation of the detention of opposition activists, including elected representatives to the parliament," said the statement.

Britain has proposed that the EU formally adopt London's policy of discouraging tour operators from offering holidays in Myanmar, while calling for an extension of a visa ban on junta members to cover lower-ranking officials.

But no decision on that was to have been taken at the meeting, and Britain is hoping it can influence the debate when the ministers meet again on Oct. 26 to review the EU's two-year-old sanctions against the junta in Yangon.

The junta official said interference by western countries was only delaying democratic progress and undermining national stability.

"New democracies do not automatically succeed. Myanmar must act realistically and responsibly to lay the foundation of a democratic system that is suited to its culture and national security," the spokesman said.

"The government there-

fore believes that irresponsible actions by foreign nations will jeopardise Myanmar's transition to democracy."

Opposition groups say the junta has arrested up to 2,000 dissidents — including about 200 NLD MPs — since May, in what they call the worst crackdown on the democracy movement since the crushing of student demonstrations in 1988.

The junta maintains it is drafting a new constitution to prepare for democratic elections. The NLD has boycotted the process, saying the military is only trying to maintain its grip on power.

## Forest fires in Far East still going on

MOSCOW (AP) — Forest fires that have caused enormous damage in Russia's Far East are lessening, but a top official said it was too early to say if the problem was under control, the ITAR-TASS news agency reported Tuesday.

Vladimir Pominov, a top forestry official in the Far East, said 20 fires had been put out, but 78 other fires continue to rage, covering some 450,000 hectares of forest.

The fires, some of which have been raging since the summer, have destroyed some 1.5 million hectares of woodlands since the summer.

The fires have killed huge amounts of local wildlife. A U.N. mission was expected to arrive Tuesday to study the situation and consider possible international assistance.



High Commissioner for Human Rights, who is responsible for organising the investigation, said that the attack on the mosque in the town of Krivajana was the first of its kind in the region. The attack was carried out by a group of about 20 people, who were armed with knives and axes. The attack resulted in the death of three people and the injury of several others. The High Commissioner has called for a thorough investigation into the attack and for the perpetrators to be brought to justice. He has also called for the protection of religious minorities in the region.

## CDU nominate as new leader

Christian Democrats were today set to elect a new leader, with the party's current leader, Wolfgang Schäfer, facing a challenge from a group of younger members. Schäfer has led the party since 1994, but his leadership has been questioned in recent years. The challenge is seen as a sign of a generational change within the party. The election will take place at a party congress in Berlin. Schäfer's supporters are expected to win, but the challenge is expected to be a close one.

## mushroom scare ria. Romania

A scare over the safety of mushrooms has led to a ban on the sale of wild mushrooms in Romania. The scare was caused by reports that some people had become ill after eating wild mushrooms. The authorities have now issued a ban on the sale of wild mushrooms, and have urged people to be careful when foraging. The ban is expected to last for several months. The authorities have also issued a warning to people not to eat wild mushrooms unless they are sure of what they are eating.

## accused of rape er year in jail

A man accused of rape has been sentenced to a year in jail. The man, who was 35 years old, was charged with the rape of a 21-year-old woman. The woman had reported the rape to the police, and the man had been charged. The trial took place in a court in London. The judge sentenced the man to a year in jail, with a suspended sentence for two years. The man is expected to serve his sentence in a prison in London.

# Economy

## Omani sultan tells youth to seek range of jobs

MUSCAT (R) — Oman's Sultan Qaboos Tuesday urged the country's youth to accept a wider range of jobs as part of the Gulf state's drive to cut down on expatriate labour.

The sultan, on his annual meet-the-people tour around the country, said too much money was flowing out of the Arab state through expatriate remittances, state-run television reported.

"Our youth must not shy away from any work which can bring them income, no matter what that income is," Sultan Qaboos told citizens in the northern areas of Batinah and Musandam.

Foreigners make up around 600,000 of Oman's 2.2 million population. Like other Arab Gulf states that depend heavily on foreign labour, Oman is trying to provide more jobs for its own nationals, particularly in the private sector.

But many private companies have traditionally preferred to employ cheaper expatriate workers and some say nationals lack the required skills. Omani citizens for their part have tended to seek white-collar jobs in the public sector.

"(Money) is being transferred abroad through the unnecessary (expatriate) labour force," the sultan said. "Why does the size of (foreign) labour remain at this level which is unnecessary when we can do without some of them?"

Oman, an independent

oil producer on the eastern edge of the Arabian peninsula, has said some 500,000 foreign workers are employed in the country's private sector, compared to about 40,000 Omanis.

Sultan Qaboos said his government had authorised the establishment of three private universities, which he said could be an alternative for students who would otherwise study abroad.

He said the Sultan Qaboos University in Muscat — the only one in the country — was unable to cope with the large number of students seeking admission.

He said the government was also encouraging students to pursue vocational training. Meanwhile, Oman's budget deficit swelled by 235 per cent to \$313.8 million in the first seven months of the year, according to an official report.

During the same period, revenue from crude oil slid 22.8 per cent compared with the first seven months in 1997, the economy ministry report said, without giving sales figures.

However, an earlier report said oil revenue for the first half of the year totalled \$1.676 billion, or about 70 per cent of total earnings of \$2.429 billion.

The Sultanate of Oman, which is not a member of OPEC, produced 916,000 barrels of oil per day (bpd) during the first half of this year, according to the

report published by the official news agency ONA.

In April, Oman cut production by 30,000 bpd in a bid to support oil prices.

Oman's National Economy Minister Ahmed Ibn Abdul Nabi Mekki told ONA that the sultanate did not intend to devalue the rial, despite the slide in oil revenue, which accounts for 40 per cent of its gross domestic product.

Oil Minister Mohammad Al Romhi said low oil revenues would reduce growth in the sultanate's upstream oil activities but that the downstream oil sector would be unaffected.

"The low oil prices will not affect the downstream activities due to the participation of foreign capital and the private sector."

The upstream activity, which is mainly based on government programmes, will go slow, he said, quoted by the Oman Daily Observer.

Romhi warned that oil prices might remain low for two years. "I am not saying that the prices will not rise before this period but a stable higher price may not prevail. We are going to see stagnation for two years," he said.

The rock-bottom oil revenues would force Oman to "revise the fiscal deficit and review expenditure due to the fall in revenue. If the oil prices continue to remain low for the next two years, we will face some difficulties," he said.

## U.N. report: Small loans aren't only answer to poverty eradication

UNITED NATIONS (AP) — A new U.N. report questions recent widespread support for "microcredit loans" as a primary tool to help eradicate poverty, saying many recipients simply aren't in a position to use the money effectively.

The report questions a widely held belief — including within the United Nations — that the loans, amounting to several hundred dollars each, can effectively empower the world's poor with a minimum of cost and bureaucracy.

The report, released by the U.N. Department of Economic and Social Affairs, acknowledges that a few lending institutions have had great success with the loans — including the Grameen Bank in Bangladesh and Accion International, which has lent \$1 billion to Latin America over the last five years.

But it cites studies which show there are "limits to the use of credit as an instrument for poverty eradication."

"Many people, especially the poorest of the poor, are usually not in a position to undertake an economic activity, partly because they lack business skills, and even the motivation for business," the study says.

The report also notes that the relatively high interest rates in many developing nations make the loans more expensive.

Poor administrative structures can also incur extra costs. "If the transaction costs, combined with high interest rates, require that the operation in question generate profit margins of the order of 30 per cent to 50 per cent, it is not clear that this would be economically very beneficial," the report said.

The report recommends that administrative structures be strengthened, and that loans be provided in the context of access to land, appropriate technology, markets, self-help solidarity groups and counselling.

It also stressed that the loans should be conceived of as only one component of an overall strategy to foster small business enterprise.

Microcredit programmes came to prominence in the last decade as expectations for public financing diminished. At a "Microcredit Summit" held last year in Washington, donors agreed to a plan that would extend small loans to 100 million poor households by 2005.

Telebras.

The study found that in addition to effects of the Asian crisis, Latin America's slow economic growth could be blamed on the El Nino weather phenomenon which ravaged livestock, agriculture, fishing and infrastructure.

But the Asian crisis was the main factor affecting the region's economies.

"Although the prudent management of the economy and the application of other preventative measures have held off a crisis in the region, for several reasons it would be best to maintain a cautious attitude," the study said.

Foreign capital flows slowed in the first half of the year but the study predicted a "recovery in the second half" helped by the \$19 billion privatisation in July of Brazil's

REUTERS

REUTERS

## The Business of Information

Major Currencies & Cross Rates Prices as at..... 6/10/98 20:46

Currency	USD	DEM	GBP	CHF	JPY	CAD	ITL	NLG	FRF
US Dollar	-	1.6316	0.6942	1.3405	131.07	1.5496	1612.00	1.3396	5.4682
DE Mark	0.6129	-	0.3640	0.8224	80.34	0.9501	368.29	1.1282	3.3528
GB Sterling	1.6830	2.7444	-	2.2662	220.50	2.6080	2712.19	3.0951	9.2002
CH Franc	0.7480	121.62	0.4426	-	97.68	1.1554	1301.10	137.08	4.0747
JP Yen	0.0076	1.2438	0.4829	1.0223	-	1.1820	12.29	140.29	4.1708
CA Dollar	0.6453	1.0482	0.3795	0.8636	1.18	-	1038.38	1.1818	3.5184
IT Lira	0.0006	1.0108	0.3879	0.8831	1231.83	0.9603	-	11.40	3.3886
NL Guilder	0.5436	88.60	0.3226	72.86	71.20	0.8421	875.80	-	2.9714
FR Franc	0.1829	0.2982	0.1086	24.5055	23.94	0.2834	33.63	33.6300	-

Middle Eastern Currencies

Currency	USD	JOD	SAR	BAH	QAT	KUW	AED	LBP	EGP
US Dollar	-	0.7090	3.7505	0.3770	3.6402	0.3029	3.6728	1502.00	3.4050
Jordan Dinar	1.4104	-	5.2898	0.6317	5.1343	0.4272	5.1803	2118.48	4.8025
Saudi Riyal	0.2666	0.1890	-	0.1005	0.97	0.0808	0.98	400.48	0.9079
Bahrain Dinar	2.65	1.8807	9.9488	-	9.66	0.8035	9.74	3984.30	9.0323
Qatar Dinar	0.2747	0.1948	1.0303	1.0303	-	0.0832	1.01	412.61	0.9354
Kuwait Dinar	3.3014	2.3407	12.3820	1.2448	12.02	-	12.13	4958.73	0.9354
Emirates Dinar	0.2723	0.1930	1.0212	1.0212	0.9911	0.0825	-	408.95	0.9271
Lebanese/1000	0.67	0.4720	2.4970	0.2510	2.4238	0.2017	2.4453	-	2.2670
Egyptian	0.2937	0.2082	1.1015	0.1107	1.0691	0.0880	1.0786	441.12	-

Energy

Oils	Last	review
Brent	0.00	0.00
W. Texas	15.54	15.21
Bonny	0.00	0.00
Dubai	13.77	13.88
UL Gas	146.00	146.00

Mid-East Currencies

Currency	USD	DEM	GBP	CHF	JPY
SA Riyal	0.2666	0.4350	0.15843	0.35768	34.9638
AE Dirham	0.2723	0.44419	0.16178	0.36526	35.7028
KW Dinar	3.3014	5.38503	1.96155	4.4287	43.29
BH Dinar	0.3770	4.32713	1.57604	3.5872	347.826
CY Pound	2.066	3.3692	1.2266	2.7689	270.759

Metal Prices

Metal	Bid	Offer
Gold (oz's)	295.5	296
Silver (oz's)	5.08	5.11
Platinum (oz's)	341	343
AL (3 Months)	1327	1329
CU (3 Months)	1602	1605
Zinc (3 Months)	974	978
Lead (3 Months)	520	523
NI (3 Months)	3580	3590

Libor Fixing

Period	-1-	-3-	-6-	-1-
Cncy	Month	Months	Months	Year
USD	5.4063	5.3203	5.1445	4.9063
GBP	7.4688	7.3125	7.1250	6.8516
JPY	0.3555	0.3857	0.4141	0.4453
DEM	3.5000	3.5625	3.5469	3.5000
FRF	1.2500	1.4531	1.4683	1.5313
CHF	3.4980	3.5313	3.5294	3.5098
ITL	0.5060	4.8070	4.2360	-

\* JOD Cross Rates

Currency	Buy	Sell
US Dollar	0.708	0.710
GB Sterling	1.191	1.197
DE Mark	0.4342	0.4364
CH Franc	0.5278	0.5304
FR Franc	0.1295	0.1301
JP Yen	0.5282	0.5318
NL Guilder	0.385	0.3869
IT Lira	0.4393	0.4415

\* Source: Central Bank of Jordan.

## AL BUSTAN PALACE INTER-CONTINENTAL, MUSCAT WINS TOP AWARDS

THE Al Bustan Palace Inter-Continental, Muscat is the best business hotel in the world, according to readers of the prestigious U.K. magazine Cond Nast Traveller.

The Al Bustan Palace Inter-Continental was voted number one in a poll of 26,000 readers. The award was collected by the hotel's regional vice president and general manager, Issa Al Hajry, at a recent ceremony in London.

Cond Nast Traveller said of the Al Bustan Palace Inter-Continental, Muscat "although it is a business hotel, it doesn't have that 'corporate' feel, because of its exciting location, amazing service and delicious food."

Cond Nast Traveller went on to place the hotel second in its

list of 100 "best of the best," with a 96 per cent satisfaction score.

The Amstel Inter-Continental Amsterdam was ranked sixth in Cond Nast Traveller's best overseas business hotels category. The hotel came 34th in the magazine's top 100 list, with a satisfaction score of 88.7 per cent.

Nominees qualified for the awards only when a set number of nominations had been received. The 13 categories for nominations included overseas holiday hotels, U.K. holiday hotel, overseas business hotels, U.K. business hotels, countries, islands, airlines, cruise lines, overseas cities, U.K. cities, airport, car rental and spa resorts/hotels.

## Asia crisis slows Latin America growth

SANTIAGO (AFP) — Economic growth in Latin America is expected to slow to a modest three per cent this year as the region's economies struggle to overcome the effects of Asia's turmoil, according to a new study.

A preliminary study released here by the U.N. Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) said the average gross domestic product for the region would fall to three per cent from 5.3 per cent in 1997, "one of the highest rates in the past two decades."

Last year's growth combined with one of the lowest inflation rates since World War II at just

10.4 per cent, and record foreign investment of \$80 billion led to optimism for Latin America.

But the crisis in Asia, one of the region's most important export markets, turned the optimism to caution.

ECLAC noted that in the first six months of 1998 there was a "slight regression" in inflation control and cited the specific case of Colombia where prices could increase by 20 per cent for the year.

Foreign capital flows slowed in the first half of the year but the study predicted a "recovery in the second half" helped by the \$19 billion privatisation in July of Brazil's

## THE Daily Crossword Edited by Wayne Robert Williams

1 Across: 1 Loan sharks? 8 Most fluffy 15 Harlequin candlestick 16 Balon master 17 Pecan candy 18 Pallate 19 Attempts 20 Baseball stat. 22 Guitars' spot 23 Listening organs 24 Make by hand 26 "I Remember Mama" papa 27 Antibes summer 28 Corporate pirates 30 Mario Park initials 31 "Air Music" composer 32 Art stands 35 With equivocation 37 Part of Manhattan 40 Establish conclusively 44 Unspecified individual 45 Vatican chapel 47 "The Belle" poet 48 Answer to "Shell we?" 50 In the middle of 51 Tolstoy and Gorcey 52 Gives off 54 Country hotel 55 PBS political satirist Will 56 Individual performer 58 Spring (from) 60 Dig up 61 Calmer 62 Badgers 63 Trappers

5 Down: 1 Oodles 2 Jag the edge of 3 Not yet broadcast 4 Parts

5 Across: 5 Goddess of discord 6 Operated 7 Spanish wines 8 Discard 9 Have debts 10 Register as candidate 11 Court action 12 Heighten 13 More than two 14 Locks and shocks 21 Birdie game 24 Hit by Jay & the Americans 25 Cornering prey up an oak 28 Wanders randomly 29 French room 32 Fam. member 34 "Toties" director Pollack, casually 36 Narcissism 37 Hides away 38 Flower or sea polyp

39 Makes mosaic repairs 41 Manage 42 Wodehouse's Bertie 43 Homemakers of a sort 46 Singers Bessie and Kate

48 Summer ermine 51 Part of LEM 53 Become a father 55 Art of the absurd 57 Orch. section 59 Fellows

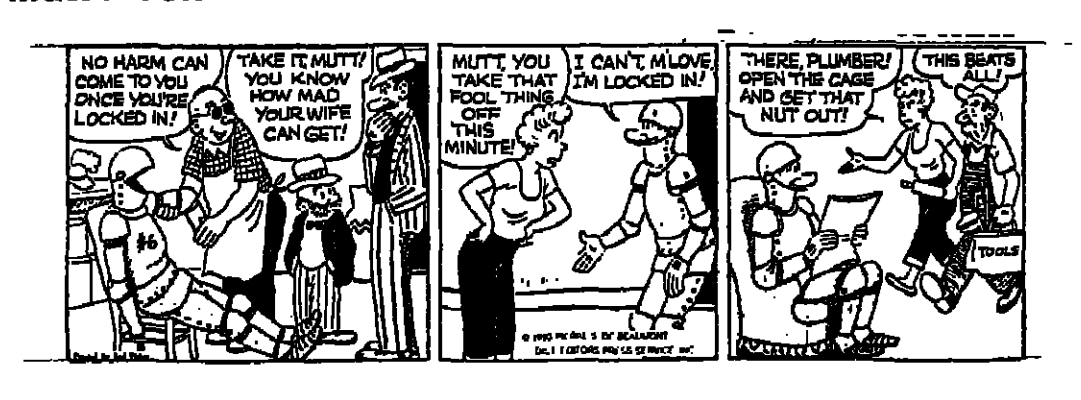
## Peanuts



## Andy Capp



## Mutt'n'Jeff



## THE BETTER HALF. By Glasbergen

**Cellular Phone Repair Service**

"If the sensor detects a boring conversation, it automatically shuts off to conserve battery life."

## JUMBLE. THAT SCRAMBLED WORD GAME

Unscramble these four Jumbles, one letter to each square, to form four ordinary words.

**NIDEK**

**DILEY**

**VOINEC**

**TEWGIN**

Now arrange the circled letters to form the surprise answer, as suggested by the above cartoon.

Answer here:

(Answers Monday)

Yesterday's Jumbles: LOOSE SEIZE WHITEN OCELOT Answer: Where the neighborhood gossip hangs out — AT THE CLOTHES LINES



## Jordan Times

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## Crucial round

ONLY GENUINE progress during the current visit of U.S. Secretary of State Madeleine Albright to the region would avert the much-feared unilateral declaration of a Palestinian state in May.

Palestinian President Yasser Arafat, his ministers and people at large will not settle for less than a state on their national soil with Jerusalem as its capital. That much is their declared intention and *raison d'être*. But the Palestinians, who fought towards that end for much of this century certainly can wait for months or a year. What is most important is what state they will get, not when.

That is why Albright's visit must produce results. The so-called American initiative is now eight months old. It has been accepted by the Palestinians, and the Israelis have so far managed to modify it a few times all under the pretext of Israeli security. Israeli security has not been as good as it has in the past two years. No thanks to the Israeli security forces that have failed over the decades of occupation to quell the Palestinians' legitimate quest for freedom. But mainly because of the Palestinians' genuine desire to part with Israel, to have their own state and live in peace after a century of strife.

If Albright manages to convince her Israeli interlocutors to go-ahead with implementing the American initiative for the second redeployment of the Oslo accords, the process can be put back on track towards a third redeployment and the final status talks.

Of course we will only head in that direction if the government of Benjamin Netanyahu stopped stalling and met its end of the bargain by withdrawing from 13 per cent of the West Bank, according to Palestinians free passage between Gaza and the West Bank and allowing them to operate their Gaza airport.

This much Albright must secure before leaving the region this time. Otherwise we will continue the countdown towards May 4, 1999, which, measured by the slow pace of the peace process, is only a wink away.

### ARABIC PRESS COMMENTARIES

Al Ra'i's Fahed Fanek said the budget's actual performance during the first half of this year is not good. The preliminary results reveal that local revenue has dropped to 3.8 per cent from last year and external grants seven per cent, said the writer. Simultaneously, current spending increased 9.5 per cent from last year and capital spending dropped to 1.1 per cent, thus total spending, which is 7.7 per cent, exceeds both the economic growth and inflation percentages. According to Fanek, the budget shortage increased to JD194 million in the first half of 1998 from JD94.2 million in the first half of 1997, and if this continues in the second half of 1998, the shortage will be seven per cent for 1998. It is a problem that needs to be solved here in the country by the government and not in Washington, where the Jordanian economic team has gone to attend the World Bank's general assemblies, the writer said.

Al Ra'i's Hussein Abu Ruman said the determination to solve big national problems such as unemployment, must not diminish under any circumstances. Combating unemployment needs a suitable national climate to specify priorities through accuracy and transparency, he added. Before making any final decisions about setting up military service as a solution for the unemployment problem, the issue needs careful study and clear vision, because it includes new ideas, the writer said. One of the important priorities that have to be set in order to solve the problem of unemployment is to organise the labour market, said the writer, and added that the government has to make sure that the authorities involved in the issue are implementing the law in a manner that does not harm employees regardless of their nationalities, Abu Ruman said.

## Washington Watch

# Our advice to Madeleine Albright

Dr. James Zogby

IN RECENT discussions with U.S. Secretary of State Madeleine Albright and other White House and State Department officials, Arab Americans have presented a consensus view on the current state of U.S.-Middle East policy.

Prompting our concerns have been a number of recent developments which have exposed the growing alienation of the United States in the Arab World and the increasing suspicion and hostility shown toward U.S. policy and actions in the region.

There is a profound gap that exists between U.S. understanding of and policy toward the region and the reality and needs of the Arab people.

Arabs strongly criticise U.S. policy as lacking even-handedness and displaying a clear double standard — one standard for Israel and another for Arab and Muslim countries. The United States is further criticised for failing to display a consistent commitment to human rights and the rule of law and for failing to live up to its role as guarantor of the agreements it helped Palestinians and Israelis conclude in Washington, Paris, Cairo, Taba and Hebron.

This failure of the administration to confront Israeli intransigence and obstructionism has been most damaging to the U.S. standing in the Middle East especially during the past year as Arabs have watched the Netanyahu government ignore one U.S. deadline after another during the past year only to learn that there were no deadlines after all.

The Israeli prime minister has sucked the life and hope out of the peace process offering the Palestinians only a compromise of a compromise of a compromise of a compromise. With the United States failing to provide any significant leadership, Palestinians have been left powerless and at risk without any leverage in an increasingly unfair and distorted process.

If this abdication of responsibility were not enough, recent revelations about U.S. UNSCOM Representative Scott Ritter's involvement with Israel concerning Iraqi weapons inspections and the many serious questions that have been raised over the U.S. bombing of a pharmaceutical plant in Sudan have only served to further alienate Arab public opinion and isolate the United States diplomatically in the Middle East.

In an effort to correct this U.S. course, Arab Americans have offered a number of recommendations to the White House, Secretary of State and National Security Council officials.

With regard to the peace process itself, while expressing our continued concern with the direction the so-called "10+3" negotiations, nevertheless we believe that the United States must insist on full Israeli compliance not only with this proposal, but with the other interim provisions of the Hebron Accord. The Palestinian airport, seaport and industrial zone must be opened. The right of safe passage between Gaza and the West Bank must be implemented. The Paris economic accords must be implemented and the United States must take action to press Israel to end its policy of placing impediments in the way of independent Palestinian economic development. Israel must be pressured to move forward on a third redeployment. And the United States should publicly insist that Israel immediately cease and desist all unilateral actions specifically:

- \* Settlement expansion, road construction, land confiscation and Palestinian home demolitions;
- \* Harassment of Palestinians in Jerusalem including confiscation of IDs, home demolitions, and denial of permits for new home construction; and
- \* Unilateral closures of the West Bank and Gaza which strangle Palestinian economic activity.

We also proposed that the administration take action to improve the bilateral U.S.-Palestinian relationship including:

- \* Activation of the announced, but dormant U.S.-Palestinian bilateral commission;
- \* Certification that the PLO is not a terrorist organisation, which would terminate the anti-Palestinian legislation of the 1980s and early 1990s and secure the position of the Palestinian office in Washington; and
- \* Give formal recognition to the Palestinian people's right to self-determination.

Today, Palestinians are poorer, less secure, less free to move about in their own land and less hopeful than when the Oslo Accords were signed. If the United States is serious about wanting to advance peace, then it must act to end this

despair and alienation.

Palestinians must feel that the United States is concerned about their lives, their security and their aspirations. The secretary of state can use her upcoming visit to the region to listen to Palestinians, and speak directly to them, to give them hope and restore their confidence in peace and U.S. recognition of their rights.

On another front, we also proposed a plan to work jointly with the Department of State to work to protect the rights of Arab Americans who travel to Israel and to Palestine. We are too frequently harassed by Israeli officials upon entering and departing and their rights as U.S. citizens (guaranteed by a 1952 U.S.-Israel treaty).

This systematic pattern of harassment and denial of rights is not only in violation of law and treaty obligations, but it has severely hampered the ability of Palestinian Americans who seek to play a constructive role in assisting in building the Palestinian economy and civil society.

On other matters, we proposed that the United States:

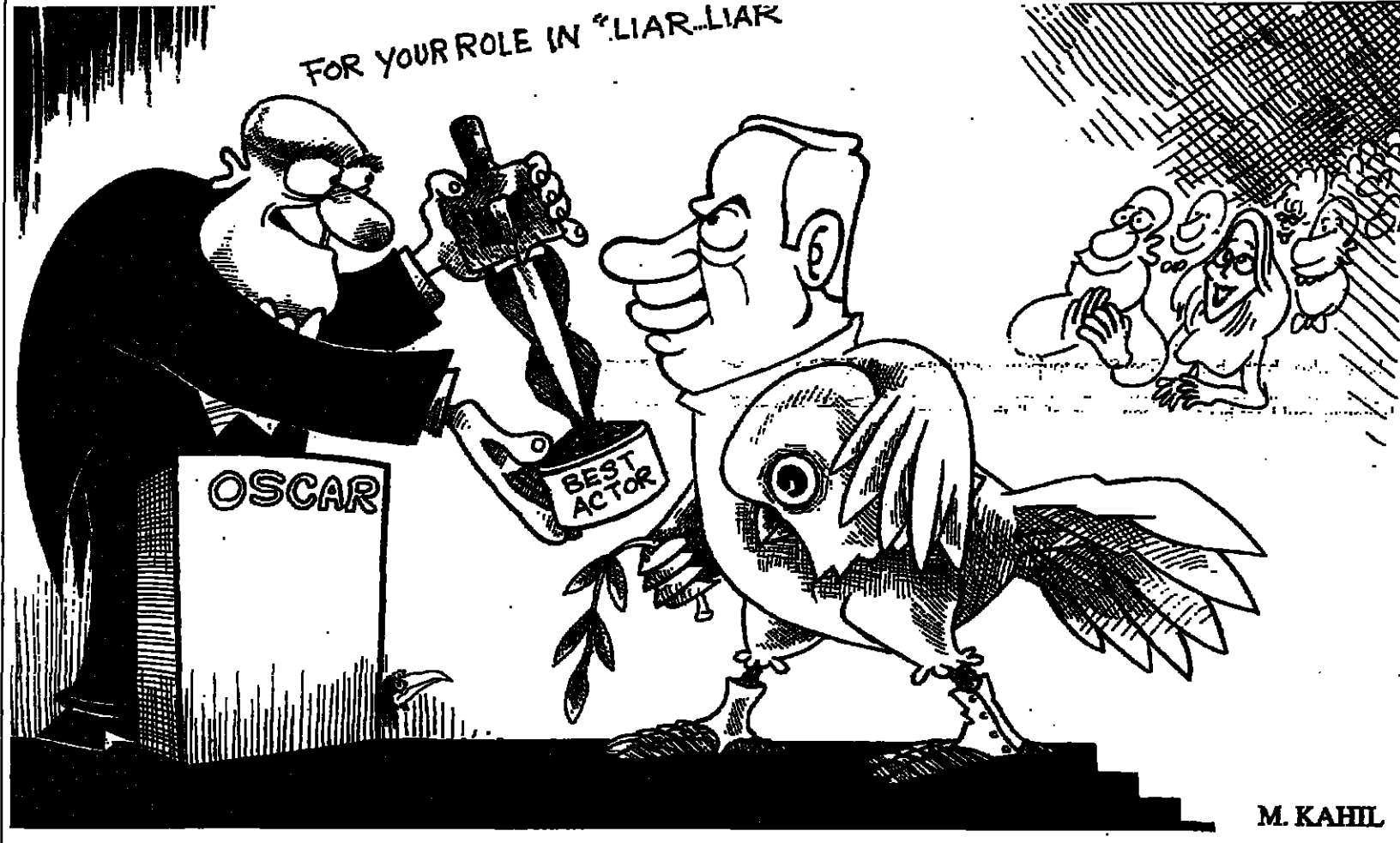
- \* Work with U.N. Secretary General Kofi Annan's initiative to resolve conflict in Iraq; and
- \* Support the call of former President Jimmy Carter to conduct an independent investigation of the bombed site in Sudan.

Finally we propose that the administration implement a more regular and sustained dialogue with Arab American community leadership to provide greater and more diverse input into policy deliberations.

Arab Americans have a role to play in the U.S.-Middle East policy debate. As Americans we are deeply troubled by the extent to which our nation has pursued policies which are so inimical to our interests and our values and to our many allies in the Middle East.

We want the peace process to succeed and we want the United States to be a respected partner in the Middle East. But for these goals to be met, we know that our nation's leaders must apply our values consistently and fairly.

America is at a cross-roads in its relations with the Arab World. As Arab Americans we want to help our nation to take the right path — the path that leads to a comprehensive just and lasting peace.



## Anti-Israel or anti-Semite?

Ray Hanania is a Palestinian American author and journalist.

THE SUBJECT of the Holocaust raises emotions of unparalleled heights among some Palestinians and Arabs.

Still, many other Palestinians who recognise the injustice of "Holocaust denial" turn away from this debate, preferring the safer ground of other, less emotional controversies.

But the debate that is raging on the Internet, backed by neo-Nazi apologists and many misguided Palestinian and Arab protagonists, is reflective of a larger problem that plagues the just cause of the Palestinian people in their quest of statehood and independence.

I don't know if statistics on the number of Jews murdered by the Nazis during World War II is exaggerated or not. But the fact is that the Nazis orchestrated a campaign called the Final Solution headed by Adolph Eichmann to murder people who were of the Jewish faith. The Nazis delighted in their anti-Semitism and hatred of the Jewish people, almost as much as they advocated similar hatreds of other non-Aryan peoples, including the Arabs and Muslims.

Concentration camps did exist. Oftentimes, Palestinians point to the Jewish outcry against Nazi policies when they equate unjust Israeli policies against the Palestinian people. Policies often based upon race and religion.

The question most often asked by Arabs is, how can someone who is Jewish whose people have suffered so brutally under the hands of the Nazis, then turn around and embrace policies of discrimination against Palestinians? That is a proper question to raise. The policies of some Israeli settlers and right-wing conservatives in Israel are founded upon policies of racial discrimination against Arab Muslims and Christians.

On the other hand, individuals have the right to question the Holocaust. Some academic work is being done in reviewing the Holocaust and analysing statistics, events and data. These researchers are being attacked as being anti-Semitic, and in some cases, those attacks are unfair.

But Holocaust revisionism is not necessarily a real concern to Palestinians, nor should it be. It should, instead, be the focus of a larger debate.

In simple language, some Palestinians have a difficult time understanding their own frustrations and suffering, just as many Jews have a problem distinguishing between criticism of Israel and true anti-Semitism. Many Arabs look at Israel not as a political state founded on a religion, but the very embodiment of Judaism. In their minds, they do not distinguish between Jews and Zionists, although their rhetoric claims to acknowledge a distinction.

These misguided Arab critics often target the religion of the dispossessors rather than on the politics of dispossession. So, they attack people of the "Jewish faith" rather than framing the debate in non-sectarian, non-religious terms.

As a Palestinian, I was raised on the belief that we are driven by the idealistic goal of creating a Palestinian state where Christians, Muslims and Jews would live side by side with equal rights and protections, and where no religion would be held up higher than another.

That's what some of us say. And while it is idealism, many, like myself, have accepted the notion of compromise based on land-for-peace in which a Palestinian state is established in the West Bank, Gaza Strip and Arab east Jerusalem. For me, that is an important goal to stand by and defend.

But some in my community have forgotten that pledge, which is a part of the moral foundation of the righteousness of the Palestinian cause. Our Palestinian cause is not anti-Jewish, but instead is founded on anti-discrimination, anti-racism, anti-injustice. Those who try to make this an anti-Jewish cause are wrong.

The creation of the concept of a "Jewish national homeland" has raised two issues, one of which has been forgotten by the turbulent events of the past half-century. There are two very distinct issues here where the line is being blurred by a recent debate on the Internet: The first issue is the concept of a government that identifies a single religion as the "official" or de facto "state religion".

The second issue is that of the creation of a single-religion state where members of other religions are discriminated against based on, as the late mayor of Nazareth once told me, "policy, practice and reality." In principle, the Arab World is hard pressed to argue that it opposes the "concept" of a state where one religion is given special prominence or status, since nearly every Arab country is founded on the recognition of Islam as the "state religion". Is there a double standard, therefore, in thus denying the right of Jews to establish a state where Judaism is recognised as the "State religion" in much the same way as Islam is officially recognised as the state religion in Arab countries? We don't deny the right of Jews to seek to establish a state where their religion is given special status, because we don't deny that in our own countries. If we do deny the right of Jews to seek to establish a state where Judaism is given special status, then we are denying the right of Arab countries to declare Islam the official state religion? It is a "double standard".

By no means is this issue solely a problem among Jews and Muslims. In fact, the same problem exists in the United States. This country does not officially recognise

Christianity as the "state religion" by dictate, but it does by practice. Christian holidays are recognised as "official" holidays while Jewish and Muslim holidays are not given the same status. And, of course, there is the Vatican, a semi-state where the government is based on Catholicism. So, too, is England, which recognises the Monarchy as the head of the "the Roman Catholic Church." It is unfair for people to criticise Muslim nations because Islam is the official religion of state in most Arab countries. But, it is also unfair to then turn around and say that Jews do not have a right to establish a Jewish state. They do. The issue should centre on the non-religious question of, "should that country be Palestine?" This issue is only a part of the bigger question where many Palestinians allow their frustrations and emotions to become confused.

The injustice of Israel — from the eyes of a Palestinian — is the imposition of a Jewish-based State on a non-Jewish majority, and then the subsequent official state policy of forcibly evicting non-Jewish Palestinian Arabs from Palestine. That is a legitimate debate on politics.

That injustice does not contradict the notion that people can aspire toward states that protect their single-focus rights. Jews may desire a Jewish state as much as Muslims desire an Islamic state.

And this brings us to the bigger issue at hand here. Palestinians criticise Israel's policies of racism and discrimination. Racism and discrimination are founded on policies of distortions of morality, society and government that are based on double standards.

We should not criticise Israel, because its people are Jewish, even if some of those Jewish people wish to merge religion and politics or engage in practices that we feel are wrong.

In other words, it is simple, isn't it? You disagree with a person's actions, not the person's religious, racial or ethnic background.

Palestinians have a right to criticise Israel. We have a right to question the Holocaust. What we should not do, though, is to demand one standard for ourselves, and then deny that same standard to others.

Our morality and justice is founded on the principle that we will neither embrace nor apply these double standards of justice and morality.

Those Palestinians who see issues otherwise — by denying the Holocaust and attacking Israelis as "Jews" rather than attacking Israeli policies — are doing a great disservice not just to themselves, but to their own people, too.

— Arab Media Syndicate

## LETTERS

Mahathir malaise

To the editor:

OVER THE years Malaysia under Dr. Mahathir managed to instill a sense of satisfaction and pride in the Third World that some countries in their region were trying hard to bridge the huge technological gap which has developed between us and the Western nations over the last few centuries, especially because all this was being achieved without giving up one's culture and values, unlike some other eastern success stories like Taiwan.

The recent economic crisis did little to hurt this image. Indeed, by and large, Malaysia was seen as a hapless victim of a Western conspiracy. We still hoped that Malaysia under its wise and cool-headed leadership would ride out the fabricated storm.

Now Dr. Mahathir's crude campaign to politically assassinate his ally-turned-rival Anwar Ibrahim has irreparably damaged this image and shattered our hopes. His rash and undemocratic tactics have exposed the charade behind his cultivated civilised and intellectual image.

In this age, political opponents are outwitted in political forums, outsmarted on parliament floors.

Only Dr. Mahathir can believe the cooked-up "moral" charges against Anwar Ibrahim and his friend Dr. Munawwar Anwar who until recently was the editor of *Periodica Islamica*, a very respectable bibliographical journal which was widely subscribed to by libraries and institutions around the world. The recent closure of this successful journal is baffling. Its absence will be felt around the world. The closure of such a unique journal may also be part of the plans to corner Anwar and his associates.

The "moral" charges were carefully designed, because such claims are sufficient to finish off any man in our oriental societies. It is a sign of Anwar Ibrahim's greatness, innocence and leadership qualities that he refused to succumb to such character assassination. Dr. Mahathir, if you have proof try them in open courts attended by lawyers from around the world. You have done this, because like other Third World dictators you have no case. Indeed for doing so you would be subjected to public flogging under Islamic laws. For such slander, you need four eyewitnesses under Islamic law.

Dr. Mahathir, you are causing immense injury to your people and country. For God's sake, go before you inflict more harm to the country you claim to love and serve.

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# Strike on Sudan: A case of doubtful intelligence

By Tim Weiner  
and James Risen

**SHORTLY AFTER** investigators linked Osama Ben Laden, the Saudi exile, to the bombings of two U.S. embassies in East Africa, six of President Bill Clinton's most senior advisers convened in the White House situation room to plot a counter-attack with cruise missiles.

Few national security issues in Mr. Clinton's presidency were handled with greater secrecy or by a smaller group of people. The administration was determined to avoid leaks, and that meant limiting deliberations to the "small group."

The security precautions worked. The strikes against Mr. Ben Laden's camps in Afghanistan and a pharmaceutical factory in Sudan on Aug. 20 took the world by surprise.

But within days of the attack, some of the administration's explanations for destroying the factory in Sudan proved inaccurate.

Many people inside and outside the U.S. government began to ask whether questionable intelligence had prompted the United States to blow up the wrong building.

Senior officials now say their case for attacking the factory relied on inference as well as evidence that it produced chemical weapons for Mr. Ben Laden.

Officials disclosed that the decision to attack came after several years of bitter disagreement within the administration about how to handle Sudan after the United States placed it on its short list of countries that sponsor terrorism.

In January 1996, the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) formally withdrew more than 100

of its reports on Sudan after concluding that their source was a fabricator. The reports, many of which dealt with terrorist threats against Americans in Sudan, were withdrawn within weeks of decisions to pull U.S. diplomats and spies out of Sudan because of the dangerous political conditions there.

The absence of U.S. personnel has made assembling a clear picture of Sudan all the more difficult. In their absence, the United States has had to rely increasingly on exiles, opposition groups and governments of nearby countries for its information.

Among the evidence that persuaded the "small group" and Mr. Clinton to attack Al Shifa pharmaceutical plant in Sudan's capital, Khartoum, included a report from a "sensitive source" who said Mr. Ben Laden had asked Sudanese officials to help him obtain chemical weapons that could be used against U.S. installations.

"Ben Laden directly involved himself with the Sudanese government, trying to get it to test poisonous gases in case they could be tried against U.S. troops in Saudi Arabia," a senior intelligence official said.

But U.S. officials do not know for certain that this plan was carried out, or that the pharmaceutical plant had been directly involved.

The CIA had been looking at Al Shifa for 18 months. The agency had obtained a soil sample from outside the plant, revealing the presence of EMPA, a chemical used to make VX nerve gas.

There were more circumstantial pieces of evidence linking Mr. Ben Laden to that factory, the agency is said to have believed.

George Tenet, director of Central Intelligence, told the five other members of the group that Mr.

Ben Laden had asked Sudanese leaders about three years ago to help him make poison gas with which to attack U.S. troops in Saudi Arabia.

"We believed he was deep in a hunt for weapons of mass destruction, including chemical weapons," said a senior administration official who was at that meeting. "Was it safe to ignore that evidence? After very careful deliberation, it was decided, on balance, that it would be irresponsible of us not to attack the plant."

The national security adviser, Samuel Berger, and Secretary of State Madeleine Albright were convinced that Sudan could be making weapons for Mr. Ben Laden.

Mrs. Albright called Sudan "a viper's nest of terrorists" in 1996, not long after unconfirmed intelligence reports said the terrorists in Sudan were plotting to kill Mr. Berger's predecessor, Anthony Lake. Mr. Berger said in an interview that the evidence at the meeting was "extremely convincing."

Two days later, on Aug. 12, the "small group" met with Mr. Clinton in the Oval Office. General Hugh Shelton, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, gave him a list of targets in Sudan. The best one, all agreed, was Al Shifa. The president approved an attack on the plant two days later.

But now some State Department and CIA officials argue that the government cannot justify its actions.

"As an American citizen, I am not convinced of the evidence," said an administration official who says the United States may have made a mistake.

Hours after they launched cruise missiles at the factory on Aug. 20, senior national security advisers described Al Shifa as a secret chemical weapons factory financed by Mr. Ben Laden. But

a month after the attack, those same officials concede they had no evidence directly linking Mr. Ben Laden to the factory at the time the president ordered the strike.

Nor are they certain whether their soil sample proves that EMPA, the suspected precursor chemical for VX, was made at Al Shifa or was just stored or shipped through there.

Senior administration officials concede that they made inaccurate statements about the plant on Aug. 20 and did a poor job of publicly stating their case against the factory.

"We were not accurate," a senior official said. "That was a mistake."

But officials argue that their actions have been criticized because some of their most sensitive evidence has been kept secret. So they are now making some of that evidence public.

"I don't have a piece of paper that says, in a wiring diagram, that Al Shifa is connected to Sudanese military-industrial complex, a senior intelligence official said. But "evidence plus inference" creates a strong case that the plant is connected, through the complex, to Mr. Ben Laden, he said.

Another senior official said: "Al Shifa was to one degree or another involved in chemical weapons production. I can't tell you whether the VX precursor was produced or stored there. But the plant is tied to Sudan's military-industrial complex, which is tied to Ben Laden."

Other administration officials still doubt their own government's explanations. One said: "The decision to target Al Shifa continues a tradition of operating on inadequate intelligence about Sudan."

For years, a battle has been raging inside the government over policy toward Sudan. On one side are officials who want to punish and isolate Sudan. Others would change Sudan's conduct by cajoling and engaging its leaders. The isolators have won.

In 1991, Sudan began to allow any Muslim into their country, without a visa. In those years, hundreds of suspected terrorists from around the world, including Mr. Ben Laden, used Sudan as a safe haven. In 1993, the State Department placed Sudan on its list of states sponsoring terrorism.

The isolators had evidence to support the case for closing the embassy and sanctioning Sudan. In March 1995, two of Mr. Ben Laden's operatives shadowed an embassy official in Khartoum.

In June, Egyptian radicals based in Sudan tried to assassinate Egypt's president, Hosni Mubarak. The United States believes the man who was then chief of Sudan's security service was involved. Sudan never moved to arrest the suspects.

Others in the government say there was reason for hope. In August 1994, Sudan had turned over the elusive international terrorist who called himself Carlos; the State Department called that "a significant development."

When the United States protested to Sudan about surveillance of U.S. Embassy personnel, Sudanese officials claimed that they had found out that this was done by Mr. Ben Laden's men and expelled them.

In May 1996, at the request of the United States and Saudi Arabia, Sudan expelled Mr. Ben Laden, who moved to Afghanistan.

— The International Herald Tribune

## Global Village

### Thank Allah for the Gulfies

ALL ACROSS the Levant and Egypt, locals are heaving a sigh of relief. In the mountain resort of Broumanna, above Beirut, the midnight traffic jams have disappeared. In Bloudan, near Damascus, the population is diminishing to 5,000 from its summer high of 80,000. Men in dishdashas, the traditional Arab robe, no longer choke the lobbies of Cairo's fancy hotels, nor do cars with Saudi number plates swamp the roads of Amman.

After months of solid bookings, spaces are beginning to open on flights to Bahrain and Dubai. The annual Gulf Arab tourist invasion is ending.

In the blistering heat of summer, all those who can afford to (which is most full citizens) leave the Gulf states on protracted holidays. Traditionally, European destinations such as London and Geneva have attracted the big spenders. But as oil prices languish and the Gulf economies feel the pinch, more and more heat-escapees have settled for cheaper trips to neighbouring Arab countries. Since the cost of living is low and many visitors come by car, they save a lot of money. Moreover, they can enjoy the sea breezes of Alexandria or the cool moun-

tain air of Levant without having to forsake their native tongue and familiar food.

In the first seven months of 1998, tourism from the Khalij, as Arabs call the Gulf, rose an astonishing 36 per cent in Jordan. In Lebanon, tourist arrivals, largely from the Gulf, were up 15 per cent over the same period. Anecdotal evidence suggests that Syria and Egypt have also both had bumper years for tourism.

The bonanza could not have come at a better time for these countries. All have been reeling from a plunge in Western tourism caused by the region's tempestuous politics. Visitors to Egypt fell by 52 per cent last December after the slaughter of 58 tourists near Luxor at the beginning of the winter season. But early figures suggest the Khalijians were not put off, making for a respectable showing in the summer. In Jordan, the Khaliji boom has more or less compensated for the 43 per cent fall in European tourism during the confrontation with Iraq last February. As for Syria, whereas Western tourism rose by a lean 19 per cent between 1990 and 1997, Arab tourism shot up by 82 per cent. Every bomb blast or rattling of an American

sabre sends Western tourists running, but the Khalijian keep on coming.

Arab tourists will never replace their Western counterparts. They come for cooler climates and looser mores, not the history or the beaches. So hoteliers in Petra and the Red Sea resorts are still smarting, while the casinos and brothels of Beirut and Cairo are doing fine. Since tourism contributes quite a chunk to the economies of all these countries, such a reliable source of visitors is a godsend, wherever they spend their money.

Yet governments in the region seem to take Gulf tourists for granted, concentrating instead on attracting fickle Westerners. Jordan's Ministry of Tourism, for example, spends just 10-15 per cent of its budget in the Gulf, although visitors from the Gulf account for 67 per cent of tourism revenue. Syria's tourism minister rambles on about attracting the highest class of European holiday-makers, but barely has a word to spare for Arab visitors.

Similarly, both Egypt and Jordan are currently debating how to cash in on the expected boom of Christian pilgrims in



The 'Gulfies' come for cooler climates and looser 'mores', so beach resorts like Aqaba and historic sites still loose out (file photo)

### Nigerian fraud criminals on worldwide rampage

Lagos fraudsters posing as senior government officials have become over-night millionaires by tricking people around the world into providing them with a foreign account number and as Sam Oluokoya reports, they are beating the law with bribery, wealth and death threats.

DESPITE INTENSIVE efforts by the U.S., Nigeria, Britain and other European countries, Nigerian international criminals involved in advance fee fraud are proving hard to stop.

The fraudsters are mainly based in Lagos, Nigeria's commercial capital, where well organised international syndicates are also involved in drug trafficking, kidnapping, ritual killing and armed robbery.

They send scam letters to millions of people around the world. Lately they have also been using the electronic mail. They particularly target people in the U.S. and Europe.

They get the names and addresses of their victims from telephone and business directories. They introduce themselves as senior Nigerian government officials seeking a foreign account into which to transfer huge sums of public money.

They claim the money is the proceeds of failed or over-invoiced contracts. They offer to share this dirty money with their victim if he provides a foreign account into which the money can be transferred.

One letter addressed to the International Olympic Committee, IOC, headquarters in Switzerland requested Juan Antonio Samaranch, its president, to provide an account into which \$10 million would be transferred.

The fraudster said he was a senior Nigerian sports official. The money was described as

part of what the Nigerian government raised for the Atlanta Olympic Games. It was up for grabs because it was not officially recorded.

Samaranch was promised 25 per cent of the money if he provided a foreign account into which it could be siphoned. Samaranch told the Nigerian authorities about the letter.

Thousands of recipients of these letters around the world have proved gullible. They have been tricked into parting with tens of thousands of U.S. dollars they claim is required as fees to facilitate transfer of the dirty money abroad.

In most cases the victim is asked to bring the fee to Nigeria where he is sometimes held to ransom — in local parlance "419." This is a reference to Section 419 of the Nigerian criminal code which makes advance fee fraud a criminal offence. Many Nigerians who have known poverty all their lives have become millionaires overnight by these frauds.

They have moved from the slums of Lagos to take mansions in places like Surulere, Ikeja, Lagos island and Festac town. They drive posh cars and arrogantly display a mobile phone. The first three digits of their mobile phone have earned them the nickname "nought nine nought."

They are regularly to be seen at fund-raising ceremonies doling out huge sums of money to the admiration of many. For the fraudsters, crime certainly pays.

Last year, 2.5 million scam letters destined for various parts of the world were intercepted in Lagos within three months. The fraudsters often have collaborators in the Nigerian Postal Services and millions of letters go free through the use of fake franking machines.

Immigration officials procure fake visas for foreigners invited to Nigeria by the fraudsters.

Britain, U.S. and Germany top countries whose nationals fallen to the fraudsters. U.S. secret service agent James Caldwell, an American says U.S. citizens lost \$100 millions last year.

Few stand any chance of recovering their money. The fraudsters know how to beat the law. When arrested and charged in court, they are rarely convicted or made to refund any money.

All they need to tilt justice in their favour are their wealth and death threats to scare their victims from coming to Nigeria to testify against them. Some Nigerians believe the victims deserve what they get.

They feel that by accepting the invitation to defraud Nigeria the victims were themselves accomplices in crime and just as guilty as they are.

Nigeria is under severe international pressure, especially from Britain and the U.S., to stop the fraudsters. Britain believes the Nigerian authorities are not doing nearly enough.

Not many Nigerians sympathise with Britain. Newspaper columnist Tunde Oluwalana of the Lagos-based Vanguard newspaper, said Britain was concerned because it perceived its citizens to be losing a lot of money. He added: "If the frauds involved actual transfer of money from Africa to Britain the authorities would not have been so concerned."

Nigerians, he argues, still recall that in the early 1980s Britain was not helpful when the Nigerian government sought its assistance to recover millions of dollars illegally transferred to Britain.

— Gemini News

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Keep Close

## Rebels fight for strategic Congo town

KALIMA, Congo (R) — Rebels in the Democratic Republic of the Congo said Tuesday they had killed 18 government soldiers in a battle for the strategic town of Kalima in the east of the country.

"There were 18 (government troops) killed this morning," battalion commander Arthur Mulunda said in Kalima, a small village set in thick jungle 80 km east of Kindu. He said one rebel had been shot in the stomach.

"Our soldiers are in the city of Kindu and the fighting is continuing," Mulunda said, adding that rebel troops had crossed the Lualaba river and entered the town before dawn. Mulunda said the rebels began shelling the town early Tuesday morning, but did not yet control it. He said 44 troops loyal to the government had been captured. The details could not be independently verified.

Rebels fighting to topple President Laurent Kabila hold large swathes of eastern Congo. They see Kindu as a major prize because they say government planes taking off from its airport are within bombing radius of rebel strongholds further east.

Mulunda said residents of Kindu, about 440 km southwest of the eastern rebel stronghold of Goma, had begun fleeing the town, some

on the road toward the diamond-rich province of Eastern Kasai.

Other rebel leaders, speaking from Goma, claimed foreign troops fighting in support of Kabila had also begun retreating.

Bizima Karaha, the Congolese foreign minister-turned-rebel, said in a telephone interview with Reuters in Johannesburg that Sudanese and Zimbabwean government forces had withdrawn by air and road to Kasai.

Rebel commander Richard Mondo told Reuters that more than 2,000 rebel troops were engaged in the fighting. He said government troops had retreated from Kindu airport, four km east of the town, but the rebels had not captured it. "No one is in control of the airport. They (government troops) have just withdrawn," Mondo said.

The rebels — backed by troops and equipment from neighbouring Rwanda and Uganda — launched a revolt to oust Kabila from power on Aug. 2.

But their bid to take the capital Kinshasa in late August came to an end after Angola, Namibia and Zimbabwe intervened with troops and military aid to help bolster Kabila's embattled government army.



A RATP worker walks past parked buses in Paris as bus services ground to an almost total halt as drivers went on strike to protest against a knife attack against a driver the previous day (AFP photo)

## Paris buses halted by strike against violence

PARIS (R) — Most buses in the French capital were at a standstill Tuesday during a protest strike after a youth stabbed a driver for not letting him out between stops.

About 200,000 commuters were also prevented from travelling into Paris from southeast suburbs when employees of a commuter train line went on strike after a colleague was attacked by youths Monday evening.

Authorities said transport

police would be reinforced by two extra companies of CRS riot policemen detached in small details on buses and surface and underground railways.

The reinforcements will bring to 600 the number of CRS troops assigned to security for Paris area transports.

They will back 800 transport authority police and 700 Paris city policemen assigned to the same duties.

The army also contributes several hundred personnel to a pro-

gramme aimed at preventing terror attacks on public transport.

Over 80 per cent of Parisian buses were off the roads to protest against rising violence on public transport, officials said.

In another incident Monday, two youths beat up a bus driver who asked them to stop smoking and pay their fares.

"We're not waiting for someone to die before we react," the UNSA drivers union said in a statement.

## U.K. urges more cooperation to fight child sex trade

LONDON (R) — Britain said Tuesday European and Asian nations had to work together more closely to combat the booming child sex trade and announced it was drawing up a major new plan to protect children at risk.

Junior Foreign Office Minister Derek Fatchett, speaking at the start of a special three-day meeting of officials from the 25-nation Europe-Asia Meeting (ASEM), outlined a series of steps he said were vital.

"We need to work together more closely to combat sex tourism. We need to exchange intelligence and need to work more closely to catch and prosecute offenders," he said.

Children's charities say that in Asia alone, more than 650,000 children under the age of 16 work as prostitutes and that one million children enter the global sex market every year.

Britain and the United States also admit they have a growing problem with the sexual exploitation of children.

"This is happening on a scale we find both difficult to understand and hard to believe," said Fatchett, who also proposed a meeting of customs and police officers from the ASEM members to look at new ways of working together.

"We have a duty to ensure the innocence of children is not corrupted by the evil lust for child prostitution. That's why your work today is so important," he said. ASEM groups the 15-nation European Union and 10 Asian states.

Junior Home Office Minister Alun Michael said Britain was drawing up a new plan to tackle the child sex trade which would increase cooperation between government departments and also with other countries.

"We will have a national plan to combat this problem and will implement a new approach to dealing with child prostitutes."

We will also take a fresh look at the links between offences abroad and offending in Britain," he said.

"International coopera-

tion is vital. Knowledge is power and using and sharing knowledge at all levels is absolutely vital," he added.

Britain and the Philippines signed an agreement last year to cooperate in the fight against sex tourism.

Campaigners called on the meeting not to get too bogged down in detail, saying the millions of children at risk around the world needed help immediately.

"It is far too early to be patting ourselves on the back."

Every day we waste on debating finances, children are being abused and abandoned by society," said Christine Beddoe of End Child Prostitution, Child Pornography and Trafficking (ECPAT).

"Tangible and immediate results should be our goal. The remit of this meeting is to produce constructive action which will benefit as many of our children in as short a time as possible," said Zenaida Collinson of the Philippines embassy.

## Russia says kidnappers challenge Chechen leader

MOSCOW (R) — Russia's foreign ministry said Tuesday it believed the kidnapping of four foreign workers in Chechnya was intended to challenge the authority of the breakaway region's president.

The three Britons and a New Zealander, sent to Chechnya by a British company to install telecommunications equipment, were seized by gunmen last week at a time when Chechen President Aslan Maskhadov faces an internal power struggle.

"We express profound concern over the recent abduction of four foreigners in Chechnya," foreign ministry spokesman Vladimir Rakhmanin said, reading a statement at a news briefing.

"The kidnapping of the foreigners... can be regarded only as a challenge to the present Chechen leadership and to the world com-

munity by forces which have set their aim as opposing the efforts of Aslan Maskhadov's government to stabilise the situation in this region of the Russian Federation."

Russian Prime Minister Yevgeny Primakov has expressed concern at the situation in the North Caucasus region which includes Chechnya, and plans to meet Maskhadov this week. The time and place of the meeting has not been announced.

Russia regards Maskhadov as a man with whom it can do business although Russian troops fought a 21-month-long war with Chechnya until August 1996 and the region says it is independent of Russia.

But several radical field commanders, some of whom have occupied senior posts in Maskhadov's government, have accused the

Chechen president of abusing his powers and being too cooperative with Moscow. They have urged Maskhadov to resign.

Rakhmanin said Russian forces were searching for the four kidnapped workers, but did not know where they were.

The four were working for British company Granger Telecom.

The company said it had been aware of the dangers of travelling in the region but considered the risks were worth the effort.

Many people, including foreigners, have been kidnapped and held for ransom in Chechnya since fighting ended there in 1996.

The region is still awash with guns and law is hard to enforce.

Two British aid workers were released last month after more than 15 months in captivity.

## Guinness Book doubles sales, targets teens

FRANKFURT (R) — The Guinness Book of Records has doubled sales around the world this year by appealing to teenagers and selling in supermarkets and drugstores, its marketing director said Tuesday.

Now the perennially popular book that records weird, wacky and wonderful records is seeking to expand its horizons even further at the world's largest book fair with a sales push into China, India and South America.

The book, now in its 45th edition, even has an entry on itself as the world's biggest selling copyright book.

"We have doubled sales this year and they should top 92.5 million by the end of the year," said sales and marketing director Malcolm Roughhead. Sales are sharply up in North America and Europe, he reported.

"The book has much more colour this year and an 'MTV' look to it that appeals to the eight to 16-year-old market," he said after research

showed that the international youth culture offered the best chances for expansion.

Supermarkets and drugstores were especially targeted as ideal outlets for the book, he said.

Asked to explain the staying power of the book that updates 25 per cent of its records for each annual edition, he said: "It shows how marvellous is the world we live in. It is not just the wacky things but the endurance records." But the zany records certainly do catch the eye.

Thailand's Wichan Jaratarcha threw the world's most lavish pet wedding with his "groom" cat arriving at a Bangkok discotheque in a Rolls Royce and the "bride" flying in by helicopter.

The largest number ever to attend a pet funeral were the 10,000 who turned out in New Jersey to mourn the passing of Jimmy the Canary. He had four pall bearers and a 15-piece band for his funeral.

The book was the

brainchild of Sir Hugh Beaver, managing director of the famous Guinness brewery. He was out shooting in Ireland and got involved in an argument about whether the golden plover was Europe's fastest game bird.

Beaver, aware that records sparked bar-room disputes around the world, then decided to produce the ultimate reference book for superlatives.

Twins Norris and Ross McWhirter, who were running a fact-finding agency for British newspapers, were chosen to launch the book.

Now it is putting in its annual appearance at the Frankfurt Book Fair, which has attracted almost 6,800 publishers from 107 countries. "We are here to show the flag," said Roughhead in pursuit of yet another Guinness rights deal.

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## Daily Beat

A review of news from the Arabic Press

## Lawzi: Royal Jordanian will enter the 21st century in a new appearance

THE GOVERNMENT has taken measures to expedite the privatisation programme of the Royal Jordanian so as to have it completed within less than the specified period of 24 months, Public Works and Transport Minister Nasser Lawzi told the Arabic daily Al Ra'i. In this context, the Council of Ministers has decided to form a new ministerial committee for the privatisation of the national air carrier. Taher Kanaan, the minister of state for development affairs, will head the committee which will include the ministers of transport, planning and finance as members.

Lawzi said the committee will authorise Adel QudAh, the head of the Privatisation Executive Unit at the Prime Ministry, to sign within a week an agreement between Royal Jordanian and the financial and legal consultants to start conducting immediately the necessary studies

to restructure the airline. The consultants are two companies from France and Britain.

Lawzi indicated that following the financial and legal studies by the consultants, arrangements in these two areas will be made to sell to a strategic partner between 30 and 40 per cent of the subsidiary that will be established for operations.

The minister stressed that the government will shoulder all the debts of Royal Jordanian estimated at JD100 million of which JD150 million are due to the Jordan Petroleum Refinery Company.

Asked to explain how the government will manage the debts, Lawzi said that the proceeds from the sale, which has not yet been determined, will go to repay part of the credits. "Royal Jordanian will enter the 21st century in a new appearance," Lawzi concluded.

## Prices for agricultural land seen more reasonable and profitable

ACCORDING TO Isma Ozeizi, a real estate broker, the reasons behind the decline in the real estate activity are the incredibly high prices in an economy suffering from recession and the high government fees on registration deals. "This can be clearly seen from the drop in the number of real estate sale transactions," Ozeizi said pointing out that most of the transactions are related to hypothecation and foreclosure on hypothecated properties.

The broker said the unstable political situation in the world and its heavy impact on Jordan was another factor that discourages foreigners from investing in the real estate sector. He also mentioned that the reluctance of banks to finance purchases of lands, due to the economic situation in the Kingdom, was another element

that kept many investors away from real estate trading.

Ozeizi indicated that the demand is now more on the agricultural land than on residential plots because prices of farmlands are more reasonable and profitable than others. He explained that the interest for investing in southern areas is due to the availability of large, virgin and uncultivated lands there and the reasonable prices for them. In addition, the promotion by some Jordanian companies for southern lands, through setting up tourism projects there in cooperation with foreign firms, has created demand for the areas in southern Amman and in the south of the Kingdom, Ozeizi concluded (Al Arab Al Yawm).

## Americans switch from chewing gum to sucking candy

NEW YORK (R) — Americans are chewing an estimated 190 sticks of gum per person a year, but the industry is in a slump due in part to the growing popularity of candy, especially mints, industry officials say.

While sales of all types of candies rose 2.3 per cent in the year ended March 31, chewing gum sales dropped 4.8 per cent in the year ended June 21, according to Information Resources Inc. (IRI), a New York-based market research firm.

"We think the industry decline is not due to one but a number of factors," said a spokesman for the Wm. Wrigley Jr. Co., the industry leader. "They include competitive pricing, more new candy products like the high-intensity mints that have hurt sales. People tend to experiment when new products come in and that can cut the traditional sales trend."

Nonetheless, the 105-year-old Chicago firm has had "positive" business in the first half of 1998, he said. Wrigley has been able to reverse the overall trend by maintaining both a conservative, pricing policy "which make our gums good values" and steady consumer advertising which averages 14 cents to 15 cents for every sales dollar, he said. Advertising is primarily on television but radio

and billboards are also used.

"We are also trying to keep our products at as high a quality as we can, introducing new products and making our packaging attractive," the Wrigley spokesman said. With more than 50 per cent of the market, Wrigley has some of the prime-selling products but keeps introducing new products. It recently reformulated its Extra sugarless gum to give it longer-lasting flavour and backed it with new packaging and an ad programme.

At the Adams division of the Warner-Lambert Co., the No. 2 producer, Marketing Vice President Paul Sturman said business was "fairly healthy" with dollar sales up six per cent to eight per cent.

The Adams gum divi-

sion, whose prime brands are Dentyne and Trident, started advertising Dentyne this year for the first time in five years with good results.

"By not advertising for a few years, we let Dentyne decline, but now it is on the increase again. That brand will be 100 years old soon," Sturman said. Other Adams products doing well are the new Dentyne Ice and Bubblelicious, a high-flavour bubble gum, he said.

In his view, the gum industry decline is the result of "the proliferation of salty snacks and the popularity of non-chocolate candy," he added. "I think another problem is the lack of real innovation by some gum producers. And a few, now-popular new line extensions have

taken away market share but not actually added sales to the total industry."

The three top makers — Wm. Wrigley, the Adams division of Warner-Lambert and the Lifesavers division of Nabisco (Carefree and BreathSavers Ice Breakers gums) command about 90 per cent of the total market. But there are many smaller producers with fractional market shares. Beyond the competition from candy, some believe another cause for gum sales erosion is demographic — there are fewer juvenile and teenage gum chewers relative to the population.

Whatever the reasons, the public that has taken to sour candies and tongue-tingling mints with such zeal isn't spurning all gums. Sugarless

products, functional and high-flavour gums are defying the slow sales trends.

The IRI reported that in the year ended June 21 sales of LifeSavers' Ice Breakers sugarless gum rose 20.6 per cent from the year before; Wm. Wrigley's Extra sugarless was up 7.3 per cent and Adams' new Dentyne Ice sugarless had a successful introduction, contributing to a 15 per cent rise in the company's first-quarter sales.

Although overall sales are not promising, both Wm. Wrigley and the Adams division of Warner-Lambert are optimistic about an industrywide pickup. "We expect to see sales go up, particularly because of oral care and more minty gums," Sturman said.

## JORDAN FINANCIAL MARKET

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ORGANIZED MARKET SHARE PRICE LIST FOR TUESDAY 06/10/1998



PAST 12 MONTHS HIGH	PAST 12 MONTHS LOW	COMPANY'S NAME	P / E	DIV.	NO. OF SHARES	NO. OF TRANSACTIONS	VALUE TRADED JD	OPEN PRICE	CLOSE PRICE	CHANGE
\$ 355.500	170.000	ARAB BANK	16.8	9.7	55	1030	212918	209.50	206.00	3.50-
\$ 1.940	1.550	JOR. NATIONAL BK.	12.4	4.58	13	3150	4833	1.55	1.53	0.02+
\$ 3.200	1.000	BANK OF JORDAN	8	0.00	10	27766	29365	1.02	1.06	0.04+
\$ 6.510	2.610	THE HOUSING BK.	18.1	3.51	22	12366	35217	2.88	2.85	0.03-
\$ 3.450	1.760	JOR. KUNAFI BANK	1.1	0.00	2	750	1312	1.77	1.75	0.02-
\$ .840	.540	JOR. GULF BANK	9	0.00	7	6500	3470	.54	.53	0.01-
\$ 3.910	1.680	JOR. ISLAMIC BANK	17.4	0.00	19	5674	9563	1.70	1.70	0.00
\$ 3.900	1.350	JOR. INV. FIN. BANK	21.8	3.52	7	5371	7626	1.42	1.42	0.00
.970	.710	SEIT. AL-HAL (SEITNA)	3.5	0.00	6	1700	1237	.76	.72	0.04-
.850	.600	PHILADEL. INV. BK.	9	0.00	4	3800	2445	.65	.65	0.00
BANK SECTOR TOTALS			INDEX: 272.33	%CHG: -1.44	145	68107	307985			
\$ 4.000	1.350	JERUSALEM INSUR.	9.8	5.52	2	948	1375	1.40	1.45	0.05+
\$ 2.850	1.840	JOR. FRENCH INSUR.	7.3	9.62	6	4100	10669	2.60	2.60	0.00
\$ 1.310	1.080	HOLY LAND INSUR.	8.2	0.00	3	650	715	1.10	1.10	0.00
\$ 2.350	1.600	ARAB LIFE INSUR.	9.3	0.00	1	1000	1940	1.94	1.94	0.00
INSURANCE SECTOR TOTALS			INDEX: 126.59	%CHG: +0.28	12	6698	14699			
\$ 2.240	1.410	JOR. ELECTRIC PWR.	9.4	5.69	11	12000	17400	1.45	1.45	0.00
\$ 4.010	1.550	IRBID ELECTRICITY	10.4	5.92	7	4000	6758	1.70	1.69	0.01-
\$ 2.650	1.710	SHIPPING LINES	60.4	4.68	1	1800	3078	1.71	1.71	0.00
\$ 1.940	.700	MATL. PORTFOLIO	27.9	0.00	3	1200	846	.70	.70	0.00
\$ .590	.270	JORDAN INTL. TRAD.	9	0.00	7	8850	2430	1.07	1.07	0.00
\$ 1.480	1.060	MID. EAST HOTELS	9	0.00	1	1500	1635	1.09	1.09	0.00
\$ 4.600	1.880	ARAB INTL. INV. EDUC.	9.4	2.11	4	5600	10640	1.90	1.90	0.00
\$ 1.290	.880	BARSA EDUCATION	12.9	0.00	4	1200	1100	1.10	1.10	0.00
\$ 1.800	1.060	UNITED CO.	5.0	9.82	4	600	676	1.13	1.12	0.01-
\$ .810	.510	UNION LAND DEV.	9	0.00	1	3000	1500	.52	.50	0.02-
SERVICE SECTOR TOTALS			INDEX: 105.75	%CHG: -0.12	42	39800	45063			
\$ 3.730	1.840	JOR. CEMENT FACT.	11.1	5.88	2	1537	2872	1.87	1.87	0.00
\$ 4.110	1.400	JOR. PHOSPHATE WTR.	17.8	0.00	1	650	1340	1.40	1.40	0.00
\$ 11.250	10.050	JOR. PETROL. REFINERY	10.2	8.45	7	571	6005	10.54	10.52	0.02-
\$ 1.620	1.060	INDUSTRIAL COMM. AGR.	67.4	0.00	3	724	824	1.14	1.14	0.00
\$ 5.740	2.400	ARAB PHARM. MANF.	7.1	2.91	31	6862	17802	2.60	2.58	0.02-
\$ 5.200	1.060	JOR. CERAMIC IND.	9.35	0.00	2	450	482	1.07	1.07	0.00
\$ 2.980	1.700	ARAB ALUM. IND.	13.3	13.89	7	2250	4050	1.80	1.80	0.00
\$ .530	.380	LIVESTOCK & POULTRY	13.2	0.00	9	7000	2730	.39	.39	0.00
\$ .930	.670	ARAB PAPER COV. TRD.	23.2	0.00	3	2700	2052	.76	.76	0.00
\$ .790	.370	NATIONAL STEEL IND.	9	0.00	1	200	88	.44	.44	0.00
\$ .570	.280	INTERMED. PETRO. CHEM.	9	0.00	20	12400	3596	.29	.29	0.00
\$ 1.760	.760	UNIV. CHEM. IND.	10.9	8.16	6	1200	1155	.93	.98	0.05+
\$ .710	.380	JOR. SULPHUR CHEM.	7.2	0.00	5	1800	684	.38	.38	0.00
\$ 1.470	1.150	ARAB PHARM. CHEM.	13.6	4.88	1	200	246	1.23	1.23	0.00
\$ 1.260	.530	UNIV. MOON IND.	9.7	9.84	13	5850	3569	.61	.61	0.00
\$ .930	.480	JOR. IND. RESOURCES	9	0.00	4	7250	3625	.50	.50	0.00
\$ 1.080	.600	JOR. RUM CABLE CO.	8.6	16.39	7	5950	3575	.61	.61	0.00
\$ 1.560	1.150	EL -RAY READY WEAR	46.1	0.00	1	50	66	1.29	1.31	0.02+
\$ 1.310	.910	INTL. TOBACCO	7.3	5.61	7	20500	21120	1.02	1.04	0.01+
\$ .890	.600	JORDAN STEEL	9.6	8.16	13	70800	60442	.85	.86	0.01+
\$ .730	.580	MAT. ALUMINUM	32.7	0.00	11	6700	4424	.67	.66	0.01-
\$ .670	.530	MID. EAST COMPLEX	9.4	0.00	9	8100	4232	.53	.52	0.01-
INDUSTRIAL SECTOR TOTALS			INDEX: 76.52	%CHG: -0.03	165	163744	144548			
GRAND TOTAL			INDEX: 165.69	%CHG: -1.02	364	278349	513294			
PARALLEL MARKET SHARE PRICE LIST FOR TUESDAY 06/10/1998										
\$ 1.050	.860	EXPORT & FIN. BKR. 75%	15.7	0.00	11	30497	18397	.86	.85	0.01-
\$ 1.000	.700	JOR. INT. INSURANCE CO	8	0.00	1	750	6600	.85	.89	0.04+
\$ 1.230	1.000	ISLAMIC INSURANCE CO	94.5	0.00	1	7000	7000	1.00	1.00	0.00
\$ .800	.500	UNION INV.	0	0.00	2	20000	10600	.53	.53	0.00
\$ .420	.240	ARAB FIN. INVEST.	9	0.00	2	500	120	.24	.24	0.00
\$ .430	.200	ARAB INTL. INV. TRD.	24.2	0.00	2	3000	630	.21	.21	0.00
\$ .580	.260	MATL. PORTFOLIO	9	0.00	5	5470	1377	.26	.26	0.00
\$ .690	.560	KIDNEY PHARM. 90%	0	0.00	7	2000	2000	.56	.56	0.00
\$ 2.160	1.190	UNION TOBACCO 87.5%	13.5	5.90	3	5550	11072	2.11	2.12	0.01+
\$ .720	.570	RAZI PHARM.	8	0.00	1	500	295	.59	.59	0.00
\$ .950	.540	ADVANCED PHARM. IND.	9	0.00	4	480	268	.56	.56	0.00
\$ .500	.300	PEARL SAM. P. COV.	8	0.00	3	1250	355	.30	.28	0.02-
\$ .950	.320	OPTICALS BEARING CO.	9	0.00	2	750	255	.34	.34	0.00
\$ 1.000	.690	AL-KHALA PRINTING CO.	10.8	10.67	1	100	71	.70	.71	0.01+
GRAND TOTAL			46	77847	52028					

↑ New 12 months low  
 \* Stock dividend during the past 12 months  
 N: Listed during the past 12 months  
 P: P/E ratio is 100 or more  
 S: Negative P/E  
 S: Earnings is zero or N/A for the most recent year

ARIES: (March 21 to April 19) Mars, the planet of aggression, goes into Virgo, which is in your solar sixth house of service. So you'll be aggressively taking care of others for the next few weeks, making their lives work whether they like it or not. If you approach this positively, you can accomplish great things. Otherwise, you'll just be obnoxious.

TAURUS: (April 20 to May 20) Mars, symbolising assertion, is going into Virgo today. Virgo's in your solar fifth house of romance. Consequently, you'll be confident in your love life for the next several weeks. Instead of waiting to get what you want, you'll ask for it. You may also have to work for it, but if you and your sweetheart are working together, that'll be fun.

GEMINI: (May 21 to June 21) The theme is perfection, and finishing old business. This is not just a burden. It's how dreams come true. You've got a dream, and it has to do with stability, security and love, and it could happen. If you've already got that in your life, you can keep it. That's your lesson right now. Pay attention and take notes.

CANCER: (June 22 to July 21) Mars is going into Virgo today. That's wonderful. Virgo is in your solar third house of education. So you'll take on learning with vigour. Pity the poor person who gets in your way! You want the facts, and guess what? The more you get, the more you'll earn. Education and financial reward are also closely linked.

LEO: (July 22 to August 21) Mars is going into Virgo today. That means you'll be more assertive regarding money, since Virgo is in your second house of finances. That sometimes means you want to spend more money, but not necessarily. It could mean you'll get wiser about how you're spending your money, and make it stretch further. Definitely go for the latter option.

VIRGO: (August 22 to September 22) Mars goes into your sign today, which is wonderful. Mars brings vim and vigour wherever it goes. It's the sign of the athlete and warrior. You'll become definite in your preferences and make sure others know how important these things are. You may draw more attention than you're used to, but you'll get used to it.

LIBRA: (September 23 to October 22) You and your friends

## HOROSCOPE

FORECAST FOR WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 7, 1998

By Linda C. Black, Tribune Media Services, Inc.

November 21) An idea you've been working on is about to take off like a rocket. You know what needs to be done, but you haven't quite had the resources to pull the whole thing off. That's about to change. It looks like people are excited to get started; all they need is a little direction. That's where you come in.

SAGITTARIUS: (November 22 to December 21) Mars goes into Virgo today, making your life a little more difficult. If you've forgotten anything, Virgo's point it out. They see that as their duty. With Mars in their sign, they'll take on that assignment with renewed vigour. So make sure everything you do is perfect. If you don't, a Virgo will be delighted to remind you.

CAPRICORN: (December 22 to January 20) Mars is going into Virgo today, and that helps a lot. It'll really motivate you to try new things. There's a grand trine in earth signs right now, which helps even more. It means the new things you take on will most likely prove beneficial. Don't hold back. Get involved.

AQUARIUS: (January 21 to February 19) Pinpoint accuracy is required, especially where money's concerned, and that goes double if joint finances are involved, including money you're trying to borrow. It's not that it's harder to get. It's just that you'll have to be precise about what you want it for. And, of course, how you're going to pay it back.

PISCES: (February 20 to March 20) It's easy to figure out the details today, especially if you have help from a sharp partner. You want to get everything straight in your mind before you go into negotiations. The other people may not have done the homework quite as well as you have. This slight advantage could make all the difference.

Birthstone of September: Opal — Tourmaline

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## NBA wipes out remainder of pre-season schedule

NEW YORK (AFP) — National Basketball Association owners cancelled the league's remaining 114 pre-season games Monday and said the unprecedented cancellation of regular season games could come next week.

Talks between owners and the National Basketball Players Association union will resume here Thursday but the NBA is all-but certain of having to cancel regular season games over labour issues for the first time.

The regular season is scheduled to begin November 3. Owners have said it would take at least one month from the time a new deal is struck to have training camps and free agency before games could begin.

The two sides have failed to reach any compromise in settling a lockout imposed July 1 by owners.

Spending control of a \$1.7 billion basketball industry is

the major issue. Ownership wants a firm salary cap. Players want to continue a system which allows clubs exemptions to re-sign their own free agents.

Owners wiped out referee training camp and a rookie orientation on September 15 and began cancelling pre-season games on September 24.

"At this point, our teams cannot possibly be ready to play any games before November," NBA deputy commissioner Russ Granik said in a statement released by the league. "It's sad that we have been unable to have any meaningful negotiations."

Owners have submitted a new proposal that would wipe out the salary cap exception over four years and ensure players 200 million dollars over four years on top of the billion dollars they were paid last season.

"Everything the players have gained through decades of bargaining and

arbitration the owners want back with interest," union chairman Billy Hunter said. "Clearly the owners are not interested in bringing this bargaining to a swift and fair conclusion."

NBA players will conduct news conferences in 15 cities on Tuesday, the day training camps were scheduled to open, to explain their position in the labour fight.

Granik made the owners' position clear.

"Last year, the players received about one billion in salaries and benefits, and we have made proposals that are guaranteed to increase that number by 20 per cent over the next four years," Granik's statement said, ignoring the fact its salary cap is a feature the union loathes.

"Our proposals would result in an average player salary of \$3.1 million and a minimum salary for 10-year veterans of \$750,000. Unfortunately, the union

leadership has been unwilling to give any serious consideration to what we have offered."

Union leaders want to continue the system under which free enterprise allows owners to sign such players as Shaquille O'Neal and Juwan Howard to long-term deals worth more than \$100 million.

Owners want spending limits to prevent themselves from bidding each other into bankruptcy while players argue it should not be their job to decide how much is too much for owners.

Both sides await the ruling of arbitrator John Feerick on a grievance filed by the union only hours before the owners imposed the lockout.

The union claims NBA players have guaranteed contracts that should allow them to be paid during the lockout. The NBA contends its actions are entirely legal during a work stoppage.



Erich Ribbeck, new team manager of the German national soccer team, kicks a ball during his first practice session with the team in Frankfurt, October 6. The German squad plays a qualifier against Turkey on Saturday in Bursa (Reuters photo)

## Vikings rip Packers in battle of unbeatens

GREEN BAY (AFP) — Minnesota's Randall Cunningham threw for 442 yards and four touchdowns, the best pass performance ever against Green Bay, in a 37-24 Vikings victory here Monday.

Winning the battle of unbeatens lifted the Vikings to 5-0 and the NFC Central division lead over the Packers, who fell to 4-1 with their first home loss in 29 games dating to September 3, 1995.

"Nothing motivated us but ourselves," said rookie receiver Randy Moss, whose five receptions for 190 yards included two touchdowns. "We just had to come here and play. We knew the crowd would be a little hostile, cranky. We just had to push it down their throats when we got the chance."

Cunningham gave the Vikings every chance in a pouring rain, completing 20 of 32 passes, including four for 89 yards and a touchdown to Jake Reed. Cunningham has thrown 10 touchdowns with no interceptions in 1998.

Cunningham's other touchdown pass came on a screen play to Robert Smith that was set up two plays earlier by a 41-yard Moss reception.

A troubled past that included drugs and assault caused Moss, 21, to slide to 21st in the NFL draft and Cunningham, 35, was out of football two years ago and a reserve until Brad Johnson was hurt three weeks ago.

But both rewarded the Vikings for their faith.

"When you're humbled and get down in the pits of life, you learn to appreciate the things you have," Cunningham said. "There are times when things change. We have a little bit of control."

Cunningham surpassed the old mark for pass yards against the Packers, 411 yards set by San Francisco's Joe Montana in 1990.

Moss leads the NFL with six receiving touchdowns and 463 receiving yards.

The Packers, who allowed more yards than in any game in 15 years, scored their only touchdown before the final minutes on a 101-yard kickoff return by Rowell Preston.

Green Bay quarterback Brett Favre was picked off three times, twice by Robert Griffith, and completed only 13 of 23 tosses for 114 yards.

"It was a big confidence win for us," Minnesota defender John Randle said. "We knew we could come in here with a hostile crowd and get them out of their game, do what we wanted to do."

In other NFL news, Dallas quarterback Troy Aikman will be sidelined another month with a broken collarbone. He had hoped to return Sunday against winless Carolina but not will now be back until November 11 against winless Philadelphia.



Pete Sampras

## Sampras tops ATP rankings

PARIS (AFP) — Latest ATP rankings released Monday:

1. Pete Sampras (USA)	4015 points
2. Patrick Rafter (Aus)	3575
3. Marcelo Rios (Chi)	3467
4. Carlos Moya (Spa)	2962
5. Petr Korda (Cze)	2815
6. Karol Kucera (Svk)	2709
7. Alex Corretja (Spa)	2572
8. Andre Agassi (USA)	2545
9. Richard Krajicek (Ned)	2534
10. Yevgeny Kafelnikov (Rus)	2508
11. Tim Henman (Gbr)	2285
12. Goran Ivanisevic (Cro)	2203
13. Jonas Bjorkman (Swe)	2101
14. Greg Rusedski (Gbr)	1925
15. Jan Siemerink (Ned)	1837
16. Albert Costa (Spa)	1823
17. Cedric Pioline (Fra)	1766
18. Mark Philippoussis (Aus)	1723
19. Thomas Enqvist (Swe)	1654
20. Alberto Berasategui (Spa)	1636
21. Felix Mantilla (Spa)	1636
22. Thomas Johansson (Swe)	1521
23. Thomas Muster (Aut)	1520
24. Gustavo Kuerten (Bra)	1518
25. Francisco Clavet (Spa)	1289
26. Magnus Gustafsson (Swe)	1288
27. Todd Martin (USA)	1268
28. Nicolas Pietrangeli (Ger)	1236
29. Byron Black (Zim)	1231
30. Fabrice Santoro (Fra)	1230

## Shearer may quit Newcastle

NEWCASTLE (AFP) — England captain Alan Shearer has again threatened to quit underachieving English Premiership side Newcastle.

Shearer was widely reported in English newspapers on Tuesday as saying he could leave St. James' Park if the club's ambitions do not live up to his own great expectations.

Shearer has scored seven goals this season, but he said: "I put out a statement saying I was happy to stay. But, most importantly, I want to win things. Read into that what you like."

"I have never wanted to go abroad before. But you can never say never in football. It would be foolish of me to do that."

"The bottom line is I came here to win trophies. That is all important to me."

After the 3-0 weekend defeat by Arsenal, Newcastle manager Ruud Gullit revealed his determination to make a number of signings but the Dutchman may have to sell before he can splash out.

"I'm sure the manager is capable of putting things right," Shearer said.

"Whether he's going to sell players or be given money to spend, I don't know. That's not up to me."

"I spoke to Ruud and the chairman but it was a private conversation and that is the way it will stay."

"Ruud has come out and said he doesn't want to sell me and I believe him."

"I want to Newcastle to win things and although it hasn't gone as well as people had hoped, with the injury to me and the sale of Les Ferdinand, I still believe we can do it."

"How long it will take, I don't know."

## Fan who caught McGwire's 70th loaning ball to museum

ST. LOUIS (AP) — The fan who ended up with Mark McGwire's record 70th home run ball has loaned it to the St. Louis Cardinals' Hall of Fame while he decides what to do with it.

The ball, which is worth millions of dollars on the collectibles market, will be on display indefinitely starting next Monday at the museum that shares space with the Bowling Hall of Fame across the street from Busch Stadium.

Gerald Baltz, the museum's executive director, said at a news conference Monday he expects to have the ball for a month or so.

By that time, Baltz expects that Phil Ozerky, a 26-year-old DNA lab researcher from suburban Olivette, will have decided what to do with the prize. Ozerky said he'd like the ball to end up at Cooperstown, but then again he's not as willing as some of the other lucky ball recipients to just give it away.

"It's been pretty intense with the media, and I'm starting to figure out what

Mr. McGwire felt like at the end of the season," Ozerky said. "If he needs four months to figure out how he felt about his 70 home runs, I need a little time to bask in the glow."

The Baseball Hall of Fame is a non-profit organization and does not pay for items displayed. But Ozerky could have it both ways by selling the ball to a well-heeled individual who wouldn't mind the positive publicity to be gained from donating it to the Hall of Fame. Another option: selling the ball to a ball tour.

Ozerky's attorney, David Krathen of Miami, said his client has received countless proposals since snaring No. 70 in the St. Louis Cardinals' finale Sept. 27. There's been everything but a call from McGwire, who has said he's not interested in paying for the ball.

"He's been besieged by agents, auctions houses, individuals," Krathen said. "You name it, they've contacted us."

"I think the right thing to

do is take your time, take a deep breath, step back and see what the various options are."

Ozerky said it's hard to believe how much people are willing to pay.

"It's a \$9 ball," Ozerky said. "It's pretty amazing to think about it."

For now, it'll be front and center at the museum in a glass case that also includes the bat McGwire used to hit his 400th career home run, a large photograph of Ozerky holding his prize, and several photographs of McGwire launching the record shot off Carl Pavano of the Montreal Expos. The exhibit is called "Hunt for the Long Ball."

The case is protected by electronic sensors and there are several other security measures in place, including an around-the-clock police guard, to ensure that nobody walks off with the ball.

"This is not just a baseball, this is history," police chief Ronald Henderson said. "We will do whatever it takes to make sure this ball is secured."

## Media Partners dare UEFA to accept Super League idea

PARIS (AFP) — The president of Media Partners International (MPI) challenged European football's ruling body UEFA on Tuesday to adopt their idea of forming a European Super League.

Rodolfo Hecht, who on Friday filed a complaint for restrictive practices against UEFA with the European Union, added that UEFA's executive committee, who are meeting this week in Lisbon, should revise their decision and accept his company's ideas on reforming the major European competitions.

"All the major European clubs have already recognised that the European Football League (EFL) offers them massively revamped competi-

tions and matches of the highest level," the Italian said.

Media Partners proposals are to replace the three official cup competitions run by UEFA with a midweek Super League of 36 teams and a Pro Cup with 96 clubs from 51 countries, starting in 2000-2001.

However, Sepp Blatter, president of world football's governing body FIFA, warned on September 25 that any clubs who sign up for the proposed privately-backed Super League will be suspended.

Blatter, speaking after a FIFA executive meeting, stressed that the world governing body would take a tough line against any attempt to break up the "family of

football."

FIFA would ask the club's national soccer federation to suspend the team, thereby preventing them from playing in their national league or any continental cup competition.

The tough line was taken in a resolution by FIFA's executive after a two-day meeting here, saying that its principles of solidarity "are under direct attack by commercial companies with the agreement of certain prestigious clubs."

The English Premier League also took steps to prevent Arsenal, Manchester United and Liverpool breaking away by insisting that they would represent all their clubs at any future talks with Media Partners.

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Vikings  
Packers  
battle of  
unbeaten

GREEN BAY (AP) — Minnesota's Vikings threw for yards and touchdowns, the best performance ever by Green Bay, in a 29-10 victory Monday.

Winning the last unbeaten listed Vikings to 5-0 and Central division lead, the Packers, who led with their first home 29 games since September 3, 1997.

"Nothing more, but ourselves," said receiver Randy White, whose five receptions, 190 yards and two touchdowns, were the key to come here and play the crowd with a little hostile, but just had to push it through their throats when the chance.

Cunningham gave Vikings every chance pouring rain, cold, 20 of 32 passes, four for 89 yards and a touchdown to lead Cunningham has two touchdowns with two interceptions in 1998.

Cunningham's touchdown pass came screen play to Smith that was intercepted earlier by Moss reception.

A troubled pre-included drugs and caused Moss, 21, to 21st in the NFL. Cunningham, 35, of football two years and a reserve on Johnson was last weeks ago.

But both teams Vikings for their bid. "When you're in and get down in the life, you learn to appreciate the things you are times when change. We have a lot of control."

Cunningham set the old mark for passing yards against the Packers, yards set by Francisco's Joe Montana in 1990.



World No. 1 Martina Hingis

## Hingis maintains slim lead atop WTA rankings

(AFP) — WTA rankings released here on Monday:

Martina Hingis (Swi)	5496 pts
Lindsay Davenport (USA)	4819
Monica Seles (Cze)	4819
Steffi Graf (Ger)	3473
Andre Agassi (USA)	3015
Yevgeny Kafelnikov (Rus)	2855
Thomas Muster (Austria)	2404
Andre Agassi (USA)	2301
Greg Rusedski (Sco)	2274
Andre Agassi (USA)	1963
Andre Agassi (USA)	1948
Andre Agassi (USA)	1926
Andre Agassi (USA)	1917
Andre Agassi (USA)	1893
Andre Agassi (USA)	1669
Andre Agassi (USA)	1612
Andre Agassi (USA)	1569
Andre Agassi (USA)	1454
Andre Agassi (USA)	1418
Andre Agassi (USA)	1317



Anna Kournikova

## SPORTS IN BRIEF

### Libregts to sign deal with Nigeria

ABUJA (AFP) — Dutchman Thijs Libregts has done U-turn and will Wednesday sign a two-year contract as coach of the Nigerian national team, Nigerian Football Association officials told AFP. Libregts will sign a deal that also includes a possible two-year extension depending on the team's performance. Libregts was last month reported to have turned down the job after a disagreement over his financial package. The first offer to him was reported to be worth \$30,000 a month with \$150,000 signing-on fee. Officials declined to reveal details of the final package agreed with Libregts. The Dutchman, who succeeds Bora Milutinovic, faces a tough task. Nigeria, beaten in the second round of the World Cup finals, only managed a draw with Burkina Faso in an African Nations championship match at the weekend.

### Moore completes move to Palace

LONDON (AFP) — Australian international defender Craig Moore on Tuesday completed his £800,000 transfer from Glasgow Rangers to English first division club Crystal Palace. Moore, 22, said he was looking forward to playing under former Australian coach Terry Venables, who is now in charge of the London side. Moore has now agreed a four-year contract with Palace after six seasons with Rangers. "Rangers tried hard to keep me, but I feel it is a good time to move on," Moore said. "Crystal Palace are ambitious and I have enjoyed working with Terry Venables in the past. I have a lot of respect for him as a coach. Having worked with him at national level, I know he has tremendous qualities as a coach. Having a proven track record and he was a big part of my decision to join Palace. I felt with a proven track record and he was a big part of my decision to join Palace. I felt Rangers was a good apprenticeship and a great stepping stone, but I feel this is a very positive step and I am looking forward to it."

# No change on date of 9th Pan-Arab Games — JOC official

By Aileen Bannayan

AMMAN — Jordan Olympic Committee (JOC) Vice President Mouaffaq Al Fawwaz Tuesday denied reports that the date of the 9th Pan-Arab Games to be held in Amman next summer is likely to be revised.

"There will be no change. We have set Aug. 15-30 and sent out the invitations. I do not see a reason for anyone asking us to reschedule the Games," Fawwaz told the Jordan Times.

He said the issue was not on the agenda of talks today between a visiting high ranking delegation from the Arab Sports Federation (ASF) on a one-day visit to the Kingdom.

The secretary-general of the ASF Othman Sa'ad will hold talks with Minister of Culture and Youth Talal Al Hassan, Games Director Issam Arida and other officials.

Sa'ad was recently quoted that the ASF would ask Jordan to move the date to be held before or after the set date so that it would not coincide with the World Athletics Championship and African championship at the same time.

A recent meeting of the Arab Athletics Federation in Damascus discussed the issue and decided to send Jordan a memorandum to change the date towards the beginning of August noting that the world athletics body, the IAAF, had asked regional and national federations not to hold any events in that period.

Representatives from Arab countries stressed that otherwise their athletes would not compete at the Pan-Arab Games.



However, Fawwaz noted that Jordan was not notified of any dates when it was asked by the ASF to host the Games in 1999 instead of 2001.

"Now that we have set the date, we cannot change it every time a competition comes up. This is a big event and we are directing all efforts to make it a success," he added.

Sa'ad is also expected to hold talks with JOC officials and name a committee headed by Arida to oversee preparations. He also visit venues where the events will be held.

Those include Al Hassan Sports City in Irbid and the proposed sites for the multipurpose indoor stadium at Al Hussein Youth City and Olympic-size swimming pool currently under construction.

The rest of the facilities will be utilised at private

universities and educational institutions.

The JOC has announced that 19 federations have submitted their plans to get funding for their preparations for the Games, while seven others were still waiting for the go-ahead.

Funds cover coaches' salaries, training camps, hosting teams for friendlies, players' allocations including transportation fees, and dietary needs.

The JOC is awaiting word from Arab countries to set the final events which include 12 primary sports.

If over five countries express willingness to compete in a certain event then more games can be added to the original list.

There are 10 compulsory games for men and optional ones which the host country could add. The compulsory events are: Basketball, athletics, gymnastics, volleyball, handball, swimming, soccer, wrestling, weightlifting and cycling. Optional ones include squash, taekwondo and karate.

The eight compulsory games for women are: Basketball, athletics, gymnastics, volleyball, handball, swimming, taekwondo and karate.

The government has earmarked JD11 million for the Pan-Arab Games with JD4 million allocated for spending this year. However, recent reports noted that the total cost would amount to JD18 million.

Since the ASF advanced the date of the upcoming Games to 1999, the Council of Arab Sports Ministers increased aid to the Kingdom to enable it to prepare infrastructure and update sports facilities ahead of the largest gathering of Arab youth.

The 1997 Beirut Games witnessed the best Jordanian showing since the Pan-Arab Games were launched. Competing in 14 of the 20 events, Jordan finished 5th overall among 19 competing countries, taking a total of 40 medals, including 10 gold, 8 silver and 22 bronze medals.

Jordan's athletes gained more gold medals in Beirut than in all the past 7 Pan-Arab Games together where they took a total of 49 medals, including 7 gold, 16 silver, 26 bronze.

The Amman Games will be followed by the first Arab Paralympics.

The Pan-Arab Games have only been held eight times: Alexandria in 1953, Beirut 1957, Casablanca 1961, Cairo 1965, Damascus 1976, Morocco 1985, Damascus 1992 and Beirut 1997.

## Penev deals Bulgaria blow as he retires

SOFIA (AFP) — Bulgaria's hopes of beating England in next Saturday's Euro 2000 qualifier at Wembley were dealt a blow on Monday when veteran striker Luboslav Penev announced his retirement from international football.

The 32-year-old Celta Vigo player, who scored 12 goals in his 62 appearances, had been included in the squad to face the English by new coach Dimitar Denev but he decided to quit after a disappointing World Cup finals this year where they crashed out in the Group stage and a defeat in their opening Euro 2000 qualifier.

Penev, who travelled to the 1994 World Cup finals only as a mascot because he was recovering from testicular cancer, is the third experienced international to retire since the World Cup, the others being 'keeper Borislav Mihailov and playmaker Krassimir Balakov.

## Sydney Olympic organisers under attack on volunteer policy

SYDNEY, Australia (AP) — Sydney Olympic organisers were attacked Tuesday for an "outrageous" decision to force first aid volunteers to pay for their own accommodation and transport at the 2000 Games.

SOCOG has rejected a request for \$2 million (\$1.16 million) from the St. John Ambulance service to accommodate, feed and transport volunteers from other Australian states.

New South Wales state opposition leader Peter Collins said the SOCOG decision was mean-spirited and could wreck the organisers' chances of attracting the total 50,000 volunteers needed for the Olympics.

"For SOCOG to tell St. John volunteers that they'll have to pay \$75 each for their accommodation is just outrageous," Collins said Tuesday.

"SOCOG is happy to spend millions of dollars sending sport bureaucrats to the (soccer) World Cup, the Winter Olympics and the Commonwealth Games but first aid volunteers will be slugged for the privilege of helping out at the Games. This will damage reputation of SOCOG."

A SOCOG spokesman said the organisation had not budgeted to pay transport and accommodation costs for interstate volunteers.

"The majority of volunteers will come from NSW; if we start to pay costs for one group of interstate volunteers we'll have to do it for all of them," the spokesman said. "We do not have the funding to do that. Basically volunteering is volunteering."

SOCOG will provide meals for all volunteers and St. John Ambulance has received almost \$300,000 (\$175,000) to cover the extra uniforms and equipment needed during the Games.

St. John Ambulance is self funded through first aid courses and provided about 1,500 volunteers to the Olympics and subsequent Paralympics.

"Unlike a paid service our people are giving their time as volunteers," said St. John commissioner John Spencer. "They have to take leave from their jobs."

SOCOG is expected to launch its volunteer campaign Friday with registration offices to be established in all capital cities.

## Davis Cup seedings announced

LONDON (AFP) — Italy and Sweden, who will contest this year's final in Milan in December, were Tuesday named the top two seeds for the 1999 Davis Cup tennis competition.

The draw for next season's competition will be held on Thursday morning in London, when it will be decided which of the two nations bracketed together will be in the which half of the draw.

The seedings brackets are:  
1-2 Italy and Sweden  
3-4 Spain and United States  
5-6 Australia and France  
7-8 Czech Republic and Germany

## OKTOBERFEST COMES TO AMMAN

Hotel Inter-Continental Jordan, in cooperation with Royal Jordanian, Opel, Henninger Beer, Aramex, UMS and Chiquita, will bring the celebration of Oktoberfest directly to Amman once more. The original Oktoberfest is the famous beer festival held in Munich, Germany each year from Sept. 21st to Oct. 15th celebrating the production of the first Beer of the year. Hotel Inter-Continental Jordan will be holding the German Oktoberfest celebration on 7th & 8th October. The Sept 1 Gussmann Band will be flown directly from Germany to provide the authentic German atmosphere of the celebration. As part of the celebration, there will be traditional German games and entertainment. Along with the festivities, guests can enjoy German food and popular German beer.

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## After seeing Albright: Netanyahu speeds up settlement

TEL AVIV (AFP) — Amid a new U.S. drive to save the Middle East peace process, Israel's Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu moved Tuesday to speed up construction of new homes for Jewish settlers in the West Bank city of Hebron.

Netanyahu scheduled an inter-ministerial meeting to organise the Hebron construction immediately after talks Tuesday morning with U.S. Secretary of State Madeleine Albright, whose government has been urging Israel to freeze new settlement building, his spokesman said.

"The government decided in September to build permanent houses for settlers living in mobile homes in the Tel Rumeida quarter" of Hebron, said Aviv Bushinsky, Netanyahu's spokesman.

He said Netanyahu would meet notably with Infrastructure Minister Ariel Sharon and Education Minister Yitzhak Levy, both staunch supporters of expanding Jewish settlements, immediately after his encounter with Albright to press ahead with the Hebron building.

The Israeli peace activists Peace Now denounced Netanyahu's plans.

"This amounts to spitting in Albright's face and is a new attempt to derail the peace process," the group said in a statement.

Bushinsky dismissed the charges. "One can always find reasons to say that the time is not right for such actions," he said.

Albright arrived in Israel early Tuesday for talks with Netanyahu and Palestinian President Yasser Arafat to pave the way for a three-way summit later this month between the two leaders and U.S. President Bill Clinton (see story on front page).

Netanyahu declared his intention to authorise building at Tel Rumeida after a suspected Palestinian Islamist stabbed to death a 63-year-old rabbi who lived with a handful of other settler families in the quarter.

Tel Rumeida is home to some of the most activist settlers on the West Bank, including Baruch Marzel, a former leader of the outlawed anti-Arab movement Kach.

Israel handed most of Hebron over to Palestinian control in January 1997 but its army remains in control of a fifth of the city where about 400 settlers live. The presence of the settlers makes the city of 140,000 a flash point for Arab-Israeli violence.

The army has sealed off the entrances to the city since last Wednesday, when a Palestinian threw two grenades at an army jeep in the settler enclave, wounding 13 Israeli soldiers and 11 Palestinian bystanders.

The 20,000 Palestinians living in the Israeli-controlled zone have also been under a curfew since the attack, prevented from leaving their homes except during brief periods to stock up on essentials.



CHEEERSE: A herd of camels crowd together at a campsite in eastern Jordan on Monday, where they are reared for use by the Badia Forces patrolling the border with Syria. The Badia Forces used to rely on camels for their forces throughout the Kingdom, but now use them mainly along a 65-kilometre stretch of the Syrian border which is impenetrable to car patrols (Reuters photo)

## Khatami urges action against Afghanistan

TEHRAN (R) — Iranian President Mohammad Khatami on Tuesday urged international action against Afghanistan, saying the ruling Taliban had to understand they could not impose their will on all Afghans.

Iran has been involved in a face-off with the Taliban since the killing of Iranian diplomats in August in Afghanistan. Tehran has massed some 270,000 troops on the Afghan border. Most of those troops are due to hold war games at the frontier soon.

Khatami also said the United Nations should pressure the Taliban to release dozens of Iranian it holds, to return the remaining bodies of Iranian diplomats and to punish those behind the murder of the eight diplomats and one reporter.

Ibrahim, whose country has accused the Taliban of massacring Shiite Muslims and other opponents, said the Sunni Muslim militia had to respect the rights of Afghanistan's ethnic and religious groups to share power, the television said. "We do not see war as the primary solution to the

problem. But, of course, our patience depends on the success of the United Nations and world bodies," Khatami said.

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## Countess Spencer sues divorce lawyers for \$2.7m

LONDON (AFP) — Countess Spencer, former sister-in-law of Diana, Princess of Wales, on Monday began a court action to sue her former divorce lawyers for \$2.7 million. Lady Spencer claims she could have won almost twice the three million dollar settlement she received as well as avoiding much of the publicity if she had been divorced in London, not South Africa. Earl Charles Spencer issued divorce proceedings in South Africa in April 1997. The countess issued proceedings in London in March that year and these ran in parallel until the Earl agreed to make "substantial provision for his wife" at the South Africa hearing, and the English proceedings were dismissed.

## Interpol seeks parents of abandoned baby

FORBACH (AFP) — Interpol has put out a European search warrant for the parents of a five-month-old baby girl left on the doorstep of a house in this eastern French town along with feeding bottles and new clothes, police said Tuesday. The brown-haired baby, said to be in good health, was discovered by a Forbach housewife on her doorstep Friday evening after the doorman rang. She saw a car speed off and found the child crying on the steps alongside two big plastic bags full of new clothes, with the labels cut off, a box of German-made powdered milk and two bottles. Should no one claim the child within two months, she will be handed to the French authorities for adoption.

## Queen Elizabeth to sell indebted racehorse stables

LONDON (AFP) — Queen Elizabeth II, known for her love of horses, is selling her prestigious thoroughbred stables which over the years have incurred massive debts. Buckingham Palace sources said Tuesday. The sale of the West Isley stables, in Berkshire west of London, was prompted by the departure of the thoroughbred trainer Lord Huntingdon. Appointed in 1989 to revive the stables' finances, Lord Huntingdon finally admitted defeat and announced he would leave his post at the end of the season. "The Queen and I are both sad that he is giving up," her horse-racing manager Lord Carnarvon said.

## Free flight, cargo class

BUDAPEST (AFP) — A Hungarian airport worker got a free flight from Budapest to Zurich after he was accidentally locked into a luggage hold on a Swissair plane, officials said Tuesday. Colleagues noticed his absence after the plane's departure and immediately called Zurich airport. Although cold, the cargo hold is pressurised and he reported no serious medical problems after the 80-minute flight.

## Bombay dogs win court battle against executions

BOMBAY (AFP) — Authorities in the western Indian city of Bombay have bowed to pressure from animal rights groups and scrapped plans for the indiscriminate culling of stray dogs, reports said Tuesday. The Bombay Municipal Corp. (BMC), which runs this city of 12 million people, told a city court that only critically ill, violent, fatally injured or rabid dogs would be exterminated. BMC lawyers told the court on Monday that a set of guidelines had been drawn up in consultation with animal rights groups to control the city's booming dog population.

## Oman: Iraqi FM Gulf tour 'unnecessary'

DUBAI (AFP) — Oman's foreign minister on Tuesday said his Iraqi counterpart's planned Gulf tour was "unnecessary" because Gulf countries would not side with the sanctions-hit state over U.N. weapons inspections.

"If Iraq thinks it can rally the Gulf states to its position, it should know that the Gulf states apply the U.N. resolutions," Youssef Ben Alawi Ben Abdullah said in an interview with the Al Hayat daily. Last month, Iraq's Deputy Prime Minister Tariq Aziz said Foreign Minister Mohammad Said Al Sahhaf would tour the Gulf to explain Baghdad's view on the crisis over weapons inspections.

"We do not think these sorts of visit are necessary, because we know the U.N.'s position and we know about the conflict between Iraq and UNSCOM," the minister said.

"Our position is known and we think that new meetings on the matter are unnecessary," he said. "If these

visits have propagandist aims, we will not accept them."

He said the "Iraqi political speeches had not changed" and that it had "no choice but to cooperate with the U.N." Oman maintains diplomatic relations with Iraq and has accepted diplomatic visits from Baghdad on several occasions.

Alawi also defended co-operation between Israel and the U.N. Special Commission (UNSCOM) charged with dismantling Iraq.

"UNSCOM deals with many other countries including Arab states... according to what was published in newspapers, the Israeli intelligence services helped UNSCOM to get information on Iraq weapons programmes and not the other way around," he said.

Iraq has called for an investigation into the links between UNSCOM and Israel following claims by former weapons inspector Scott Ritter that UNSCOM had benefited from Israeli help over four years.

## 'Aziz hasn't received necessary guarantees for full review'

UNITED NATIONS (AP) — U.N. weapons inspectors on Tuesday disputed a proposal by the U.N. chief to make them responsible for proving that Iraq still has weapons of mass destruction.

The proposal, which Iraq has long demanded, would reverse the burden of disclosure that was clearly placed on Baghdad by the Security Council in its resolutions, the inspectors from the U.N. Special Commission argued in a major six-month review of their work. Secretary-General Kofi Annan had floated the idea as part of his proposal to persuade Iraq to reverse its decision to stop cooperating with arms inspectors.

Iraq Deputy Prime Minister Tariq Aziz has been in New York for over a week to discuss Amman's proposal for a "comprehensive review" of Iraq's seven-year effort to rid itself of its weapons of mass destruction.

On Tuesday, Aziz told reporters that he hadn't yet received the necessary guarantees he needed to move forward, indicating that Iraq was not currently prepared to reverse its decision and allow inspectors to resume their work. "There are some games of procrastination, and those elements are of course disturbing," Aziz said. A review of Iraq's progress, according to Amman's proposal, would clearly state what information the council needs in order to declare Iraq

free of its weapons of mass destruction — and when Iraq could expect that declaration. Amman clearly stated that inspectors, and not Iraq, should provide evidence to back up their allegations that Iraq still has proscribed weapons.

U.N. weapons experts must certify that Iraq has destroyed its biological, chemical and nuclear weapons — and the long-range missiles used to deliver them — before the council will lift sanctions imposed after Baghdad invaded Kuwait in 1990, touching off the Gulf war. Iraq announced Aug. 5 it was ending cooperation with inspectors because the chief weapons inspector refused to certify that Iraq had destroyed its banned weapons.

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## NEWS IN BRIEF

### Iraqi FM postpones Lebanon visit

BEIRUT (R) — Iraqi Foreign Minister Mohammad Saeed Al Sahhaf has postponed a visit to Lebanon which was planned for Wednesday, a Lebanese foreign ministry source said on Tuesday. The source said the decision to postpone the visit to an unspecified date was linked to Sahhaf's talks with United Nations officials. The Beirut visit was expected to focus on restoring ties, cut in 1994 after Iraqi diplomats were accused of assassinating an Iraqi opposition figure in Beirut. Lebanon and Iraq recently agreed to appoint non-diplomatic staff to handle matters related to their restoration of trade.

### 1,700 arrested in Egypt for harassing girls

CAIRO (AFP) — More than 1,700 Egyptian youths were rounded up by police for harassing schoolgirls in various neighbourhoods around Cairo, the government newspaper Al Akhbar reported Tuesday. The police action, carried out over three days in school vicinities, came after a number of complaints by parents that the youths were whistling at or approaching their daughters as they left school, the paper said. The paper said 1,725 youths were arrested in the operation, which will resume in a few days. Under a 1995 law, men who try to pick up women may be sentenced to one year in prison and/or fined \$65. Before the law was passed, they risked spending one month in jail or being fined six dollars. Egypt's school year begins Sept. 19.

### Report backs Israeli artificial islands

TEL AVIV (R) — A plan to build artificial islands off the Israeli coast to provide more housing moved forward a step on Tuesday when a report backed the scheme. The idea is to initially set up four islands off the major coastal cities of Haifa, Tel Aviv, Herzliya and Netanya — at an estimated cost of \$1 billion each. The islands would be built a mile offshore and about one kilometre square. They would be accessible via tunnels or bridges. Each would house around 20,000 people, create 10,000 jobs and attract up to 20,000 people a day, including tourists and commuters. The island off Tel Aviv would likely house a local airport. The report, which called for more research, is part of a pre-feasibility study initiated by a joint Israeli and Dutch steering committee after the idea was first unveiled in January 1996. The final report will be presented in March 1999.

### Iran suspends moderate magazine

TEHRAN (R) — An Iranian court has suspended a moderate Islamist magazine and fined its managing editor for defamation, Iran's official news agency IRNA reported on Tuesday. It said the Tehran court ordered Asr-e Ma (Our Era) to stop publishing for six months and fined its managing editor, Mohammad Salamati, three million rials (\$1,000) "for dissemination of fabrications and insults." Press reports said the left-wing Islamist magazine had been taken to court for mocking the hardline group Ansar-e Hizbollah (Supporters of the Party of God) by calling it "Ansar-e Bazaar," suggesting the group had ties with powerful bazaar businessmen. Asr-e Ma was published by a group of Islamist intellectuals supporting President Mohammad Khatami.

## Egypt's wealthy seek new life in luxury desert homes

By Hala Boncompagni  
Agency France Presse

CAIRO — Egyptian entrepreneurs are furiously greening the desert outside Cairo to cater for wealthy families who want to quit the polluted and chaotic capital for fresh air and quiet. The government is encouraging the transfers by limiting building permits and imposing restrictions on construction inside Cairo — home to 16 million people — and erecting elaborate road networks leading out of the city.

"We are being driven out by the noise, the pollution, the traffic and unsavoury neighbours," said Hisham Bartaw, a 35-year-old unmarried travel agent, summing up the feeling of many Cairoites who want to leave the capital.

For French urban expert Eric Denis, most of the Egyptians willing to relocate to the desert are looking for "close-knit communities where they can flash their wealth and not feel uncomfortable about it."

Bartaw, close friends and associates have bought land in Mansuriya,

southwest of Cairo, and hope to move into their new self-contained community within four years at the most.

The press is rife with glossy advertisements for such gated compounds with their manicured lawns, sparkling white villas shaded by palm trees, children's playgrounds, 18-hole golf courses and malls.

To attract buyers, real estate developers and contractors have found evocative names such as "Pyramids Homes," "Beverly Hills," "Dreamland," "Gardenia" and "New Cairo" for the current 30 to 40 housing projects.

They are offering desert palaces for as much as \$600,000 and small villas or townhouses for around \$74,000.

A typical luxury compound like Diyar Al Haram (Pyramids homes) offers individually-designed villas with marble baths, whirlpool tubs in the master bedroom, customised woodwork, private swimming pools and servant quarters.

Real estate companies are luring prospective clients with financial packages that include 8-14 per cent

interest on loans and payment by instalment over 10 to 15 years.

But with per capita gross domestic product estimated at only \$1,213 for 1996-97, there are few who can afford a \$1,000 down payment on even a \$17,500 home and fewer still who can live in Diyar Al Haram.

"Today about nine per cent of the people can afford about 85 per cent of what is being offered on the market," said Nabil Al Gohari, chairman of Contra real estate development and marketing company.

According to Housing Minister Mohammad Suleiman, \$7.3 billion are invested in real estate, denying reports that it was five times that much.

Suleiman also insisted that the volume of bank loans to the real estate sector was "not more than 3.8 per cent of total loans."

His critics disagree, say the market is over-invested and could go bust like Asia unless immediate steps were taken to contain the situation.

Experts like Al Gohari suggest a review of the bank mortgage laws. "The law now states that banks can-

not seize the property of a borrower who has defaulted. Unless we change that, we are going to face a real catastrophe," Al Gohari said.

Denis, of the Urban Observatory of Contemporary Cairo, wants a "transparent market with correct prices," and a review of government-built housing units that have failed to attract tenants because infrastructure was lacking.

Egypt's construction boom is the fruit of a 1991 privatisation drive. It really took off about four years ago and is expected to grow as promoters and developers realise the need for affordable housing.

"In a country of 63 million people and only 50,000-square kilometres of inhabitable land, there has always been one rock-solid investment: real estate," said Business Monthly magazine.

Figures provided last year by the state-run New Urban Communities Authority indicated that the population of nine satellite cities around Cairo, which are home to dozens of private compounds, is expected to reach five million.